A Long Life in Buncombe County: The Reminiscences of Ottis Green, Sr.

An Oral History.

The voice you will hear on these tapes is that of Ottis Green, Sr., speaking in 1964 when he was 90 years of age. He was a native and lifelong resident of Buncombe County, and his life span coincided with the evolution of Asheville from a rural settlement into a modern city.

In these conversations, Mr. Green traces his family history from 1815 to the time of his birth. Next, he paints a vivid picture of Western North Carolina farm life as he lived it in the 1880's and 1890's, with insights into the manners and mores of the citizens of that rustic society. He recalls the names of several pioneer families of the Leicester section.

After his family moved to Asheville in 1886, Mr. Green attended the town's first public school and observed town life from the family home on the corner of Buxton and Roberts Streets. There, his mother ran a boarding house and his brother Gay operated a grocery store that became the foundation of a successful business career based on unshakable faith in the future of Asheville.

In the course of his narrative, Ottis Green recalls the introduction to Asheville of paved streets, electrification, and the railroad. He remembers with admiration the works of such visionaries as Colonel Coxe, George Vanderbilt and E.W. Grove. He mentions his own service as Mayor of Asheville during the difficult years following the bankruptcy of Asheville and Buncombe County.

Mr. Green owned and operated The Ottis Green Hardware Co. for over 50 years. His primary location was the southwest corner of Pack Square, served by a warehouse on Walnut Street. He represented only the best lines, including Yale locks, Stanley tools, and Case knives. Urged to formulate a catchy slogan to accompany his company logo in newspaper advertisements, he settled on this one: "Your Normal Source of Supply."

Mr. Green speaks touchingly of his courtship of Alleene Broach, their marriage and their two children. His reminiscences of family, business and community extend through the two World Wars and into the 1960's. His keen eye, sharp memory and articulate conversation style are evident throughout these conversations, as are his religious faith, sense of humor, and optimism for the future of his beloved homeland.

These conversations occurred at various times over a period of three weeks in the summer of 1964. Mr. Green talked

extemporaneously, without notes, with his grandson, John D. Johnston, Jr. Every word was spontaneous and unrehearsed; there were no second takes or outtakes.

The technical deficiencies of the original recordings are the responsibility of Mr. Johnston. Mr. Edwin Easter prepared this copy from the original master tape. Without his expertise and generosity, a priceless link to our past could have been lost.

J D Johnston Jr
8/23/93

21 Stuyvesant Rd.
Asheville NC 28803
274-0350

panic of 1896
recorded original on one reel

Born 7/29/1879 at Newfound Creek
Parents: Jesse Marion Green & Laura Lucinda Thrash
both of Conder.
Obit. 1/12/1973 age 98.

Jesse 5/4/1949

ORAL INTERVIEW

"CONVERSATIONS WITH OTTIS GREEN"

Ottis Green was born 7/29/1874 at Newfound Creek, Buncombe County, North Carolina. He was the son of Jesse Marion Green and Laura Lucinda Thrash Green, both of Candler, N.C. Ottis Green died at the age of 98; his obituary was 1/12/1973. Collection includes five cassette tapes and a typed page of introduction by Ottis Green's grandson, John D. Johnston, Jr. who recorded the interview and periodically asked questions. The interview took place in 1964 when Ottis Green was 90 years of age.

Text inside of brackets "[xxx]" has been added by library staff for further information or clarification.

Tapes are marked so that the marked side to be played goes face down in player.

["Side 1 Early Childhood-Civil War-His Grandfather Remembrances."]

My first recollections of being in this world was a place about 11 miles west of here on Newfound Creek, which is now in the Leicester section. My father was a farmer and I remember him finishing up a house that he started several years before that. And it had been built with hewn logs. And then he had hauled sawed logs to the mill about a quarter of a mile below our house to an uncle's house, by the name of Wright. And the logs was sawed into --? (floor) shapes and then into ceiling and thicknesses and weatherboarding. And the lumber was brought home and stacked in the yard. And as time went on, between farming and at odd times, my father dressed the flooring and tongue grooved it and finished up the house.

J.J.: About what time was this?

Well that would have been about, well I was born in 1874 and it must have been that I was three or four years old before I began to notice what—get an idea [pronounced "idée"] about what was going on. As time went on, the house was finished up and Father begin to make a better living as a farmer. Found that raising calves was one of the surest ways to get a hold of a little ready cash. And also, we had some level land, which he sowed in timothy and clover grass and was able to sell that, by hauling it to Asheville and selling it to people who kept cows and horse, which was allowed inside the city limits at that time.

And as time went on, I learned about my grandparents. I learned that my great grandfather, Jeremiah Green, who was born in Watauga County in 1780, came to this county and located on Hominy Creek, along about 1815. And they had a family of 15 children, were born to the family. And my grandfather, Williams, was one of them. And when he became 18 years old, he had been working there on the farm with the family helping to make a living. And there were no opportunities of going to school anywhere,

to get an education, so that he could do anything besides farming. So he decided that the best thing he could do was to get married and start farming, start his life. So his experience was very interesting. He went to the Baptist Church, after he thought up this plan. And after service, he selected, or during service, he selected a likely looking young lady. And after the service was over, he approached her and told her that he would like to go home with her, and visit with her in the afternoon. Well, the first one he picked out, didn't seem to be particularly interested in him. So the next Sunday, he picked out another one and proceeded in the same manner and had the same experience as he did on the former Sunday. But on the third Sunday, he approached Miss Patsy Morgan. And spoke to her, and she met him graciously and introduced him to her family and they invited him to go home with them. After lunch, why, usual procedure in young couples courting in the country at that time was to take a walk down to the springhouse. And then sit around the rocks around in the spring, and talk, and walk through the meadow, maybe, something of that kind. And so he found that she was the girl. And they married and they had some seven or eight children. Among one was Jessie Green, Jessie Marion Green, which was my father. He attended the local schools there, which was very scarce.

J.J.: Were they living up on Hominy now?

Living on Beaverdam Creek in Hominy Valley. And his father, besides farming, had built a gristmill, which ground all kinds of grain at that time—wheat and corn, rye and buckwheat for pancakes. And then my father, in company with one of the neighbor boys, went to Mars Hill College—walked out there. And in the fall, September, long about 1860. At that time they, secession was getting pretty hot. And Zeb Vance was making speeches all over the country against secession. But in December, South Carolina seceded and then North Carolina did, and Zeb Vance called for volunteers to go into the army. And my father and Mr. Brooks, his companion, walked into Asheville and joined up with Zeb Vance. And then in successive marches, reached Morganton, where the railroad had reached all the way from Raleigh. And they camped. And he was four years in the army. Never came home on a furlough. And from what he says, never slept in a bed during all that time.

J.J.: Do we know whose army he was in at that time?

Well they were in, Captain Jim Gudgers was his captain. And he finally was wounded—he went all through the Virginia campaign and wound up at Gettysburg and was hit in the back of the head with one of those slow mini-balls and was left on the field for dead. But some Catholic sisters saw him, were walking late in the afternoon, and saw him move a little bit, and they took him in. He soon got all right and went to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he strung wires for Western Union Telegraph, saving up money at that time which was gold. The only kind that was any good was gold because the Confederate money was no good. And he had a belt made which fit tightly round his waist, under his clothing, and came home with $500 and in a course of a year or two, he and Miss Laura Lucinda Thrash were married in Hominy and moved to this place in Newfound.

Now on the other hand, my mother's family, a widow woman, by the name of Yount, From Charlesburg, came into the Leicester section with a baby girl and found a home on Turkey Creek, which was some three or four miles out of Leicester. And lived there for several years. The people would come in need of a surveyor, someone to lay off their land. And they wrote to the University of Virginia to send them a young man to act

as their surveyor. And when he came down, his name was John Thrash. And he brought his grandfather with him, whose name was Valentine Thrash. And in whose memory there's a plat on a big stone down in the yard of the Buncombe County Court House. So as time went on, he and this young girl met up together. He was 28 and she was 14 and they got married. And he continued to survey, working from Turkey Creek across the mountains into Newfound Creek for people. And every once and awhile, where he saw a likely piece of land, he would survey it in his own name and send the state of North Carolina the plot with the amount of money that the state was selling the land at that time. Which as I understand, varied from .25, .35, to .50 an acre, depending on what class of land that it was. Now he worked his away from Newfound to Hominy Valley and located on Tom Moore's Creek. And entered the land from the top of the mountain west of it to the Hominy Creek. And having quite a number of children, I think 10 in all, as time would go on and they got married, the land was divided up and each one got a part. And my mother was born on Tom Moore's Creek there in 1846. And as I had said a while ago, speaking of my father, she was there when he came back from the war. And after a year's courtship, they were married and moved across to Newfound. Her father gave them 200 acres of land. Which at that time had been laying hollowed. It had been inhabited with a small log cabin and laid idle for five years and when they went to housekeeping in this one room log cabin, it was a pretty hard life because there was not conveniences. A big open fireplace for them to do their cooking in and to eat by. Eat in one corner and sleep in the other. And my father immediately started clearing up the land, and plighting (?) and improving it and also in building him a house, as I previously stated. As time went on, my oldest brother, was six years older than I am, Nat Green who went on to be a doctor in California, and Gay Green who was four years older than me, who became a leading financial life in Asheville from 1900 up till—for 50 years. Then a younger brother, Grover, who never had very good health and died at 35.

Now the living, as I said, in the country there was pretty hard. We had a log house, which served as a schoolhouse and a meetinghouse for the Methodists and the Baptists—the only two denominations that were represented in that part of the country at that time. And on alternate Sundays, and usually they had a combination Sunday school during the summertime, in which the Methodists and the Baptists led on Sunday mornings. Once a month we'd have a Baptist preacher and once a month we'd have Methodist preacher. A lot of the time, some of the neighbors might use the opportunity to do a little cavorting and community work. We found that the neighbors on Newfound Creek were all good, sturdy farmers. Some of them had located there before the Civil War and were not of the age to go in the war, and some of them had come in afterwards. And their method of living was very primitive. Yes, the (--?) predominate name in that community at that time was "Cole." There was quite a number of Coles there. And there was one family that had several grown up and, married men, at the time I first remember. And I remember one of them was named Time? Cole and Jess Cole, and Bill Cole and Dave Cole and Frank Cole, and they were all brothers. And then there was George Washington, which was much older than the other, and he had a brother by the name of Joe Cole, everyone referred to him as Uncle Joe Cole. And they were very good (?) people and raised quite a number of children. Some of them still live in that part of the country and others have scattered out.

Then there was a large family by the name of Wells. Well, Uncle Johnny Wells was a Methodist preacher, and I remember he had cancer, attacked the right side of his face. At that time, there was no way on earth to stop it or counteract it, it finally eat away the right side of his face and got into his jugular vein. Well he had quite a several children, boys and girls, some of them had married and settled down there. But along in the early 80s there was four of them, two girls, and two boys that went to the state of Washington and took up land there. The government gave them 165 acres of land.

And then there was quite an outstanding family, the Hamptons. And one of their boys was a great friend of my older brother, Nat. And he went to the state of Idaho, and raised nothing but wheat. And he was very successful and he would come back every once and a while and he would tell us how severe the winters was, and also how the summers were short, but land was very productive and he'd become quite wealthy raising wheat.

And our closest neighbor was a man by the name of Plemmons. And at the time I first remember, he was the sheriff of Buncombe County. And I always had great respect for him because they told me he carried a pistol with him all the time. And I wasn't, I just didn't like pistols. I never played around them much.

[Levi Plemmons, sheriff of Buncombe County 1876-1880.]

And then there was another family by the name of Shook. Daniel Shook who came from over in Haywood County—the famous Dutch Cove, where the whole population over there had come from Germany. There were Smathers, and Shooks and some other name I don't recall right now. But I dare say, those families were all prolific in those days. And they scattered out and inhabited the country in all directions. The Shooks were thrifty people and intermarried with the people there and some of their children, as time has gone on, have obtained some very prominent positions. But as time went on, my father discovered that the two older boys was not interested in farming. He sent them away one year to Moss Creek ? Tennessee. And they bordered ten miles away from the college because that was the cheapest boarding house they could find. And they walked to school and back every day. I think they obtained pretty fair education for that one year.

J.J.: Excuse me, how did they get over to Tennessee in those days?

Well now, I think probably that they had to have a horse and buggy or ride horseback. You'd go down by Hot Springs. And that was before the railroad come into this country.

J.J.: That was about the only road into Tennessee?

That's right, the only way you could get into Tennessee, was a narrow road. And by the way, at that time, it was used by Tennesseans who were great stock raisers and grazed great numbers of hogs and turkeys and cattle. And found there nearest market was at Greenville, SC. So they would start driving a drove of turkeys, or a drove of hogs, or a drove of cattle, from Tennessee, their farms in Tennessee, and come up the French Broad River. And at strategic points, the men along there would build places for them to keep their stock overnight, because they had to drive them on foot. They'd also provide food for which these drivers would have to buy and pay for their lodgings. And they came on up to Marshall, NC and across the river there and come through the west Buncombe and all through Asheville and out by Hendersonville and Brevard to get into SC. The name of the road that these stock drivers used to get pass through Asheville, is

still there and it's known of as Bear Creek Road. And they had great big—their would be several men in charge of riding horses and in charge of these drives. And whenever they could get a hold of a little whiskey, why they usually had a pretty rough night of it. Because the desirable thing in some ways, for the people who kept the stockade, and yet, sometimes a little troublesome.

But along in the '80s the road came up from Hot Springs to Asheville, and then they finally got through the big tunnel their, and then about in 1886 the road came in from Spartanburg.

J.J.: You're speaking of the railroad now?

Yea, that's right, railroads. Which used coal burning engines and they had some pretty steep places like the Saluda Mountain, which quite a number of wrecks occurred going down it. They finally had to put in what the called the famous switchback. That if the train was going to fast, they'd pull the main switch and keep them on the main line, they just went along up the side of a mountain until they lost momentum and had to back up and go back down.

But in the meantime, quite a number of fine young men from Asheville, engineers and conductors, had lost their lives there. I remember --? was a fine young friend of ours by the name of Reed London.

J.J.: In that time, what sort of products, or crops were grown? Did you have any money crops on the farm.

Ah, let me go back to the days while we were on the farm and give you a little more idea of our lives while we lived on the farm. Now this house we lived in was a two-story house. And Mother had no way to [do her?] washing. Her brothers had taken a large size poplar log and sawed out a section of it about 8 or 10 feet long. With a foot adze, they had dug a hole in one end of it which would hold water and they had made a little hole there with a stopper which was usually a corn cob. And then the other end of the poplar log was smoothed off on top. And at the end of this poplar log, the end that was smoothed off they had the wash pot. And there they made their own soap out of the fats that was left over from the hogs. And then after the soap was made, they'd put it in the tub, in the smoke house, why they would boil the clothes after putting a little soap in their to boil it, and after they'd boil a while, they took a paddle and laid them up on the smooth end of this poplar log, they'd beat them. Finally, the first improvement in that, was to make some holes in the paddle, so that the dirty water would skirt up through the holes. [Laughter.] And after they'd done that, they'd put them in the other end of the—the hollow end of the log and rinse them, and sometimes take them back, and boil them over again. Well, that was the washing.

Well, of course, Mother had to do most of the milking. They had built a little—the waterworks was a series of pine logs about 6 feet long which an Uncle by the name of Addleson, had married one of my father's sisters. He lived up at Boilston, N.C. (?) [Boilston is not in the NC Gazetter.] Some of the family still live there. And he had an auger with a shank 6 feet long and he'd bring this pine log up and bore the hole through and then he'd make a coned shape end at one end of the poplar log and then holler out the other end of the poplar log so that the cone end would fit into it. And he run it about 300 yards up the branch from the house back of this barn, which we had that would take care of four horses…[pause] first remember as a child. I of course was with my mother most

of the time, and the two older brothers worked with their father on the farm on which we raised corn, and wheat and rye and oats and buckwheat. Buckwheat, and all these, we could have them ground by waterpower in the neighborhood. And we had the old fashioned kind of buckwheat cakes, which some people term, "the nasty kind." They had the cake of yeast to begin with and a gallon sized earthen crock. And they put some of this yeast and some mashed up potatoes in the bottom of the crock, and some buckwheat flour, which had been moistened. And that would rise over night and make it fluffy. And with that we had these buckwheat cakes which were always very thin. And then some of the batter was left in the jar, and proceeded day from day with buckwheat cakes. Course we had our own hogs—made sausage. Our principle meat was hog meat, that's a a side meat which we used to flavor beans, cabbage, things like that. And of course, we had a nice garden in which we raised onions and tomatoes and most all kind of small early vegetables. And some of the old-time gardens, which my grandmother had one of, had split railings all around it. And all around the inside of this fence, they grew herbs, such as thyme and sage, which we used in sausage and seasoning things. And of course, mint, things of that kind.

Now I think I'll start with my early youth, and my remembrances, two of which were a little outstanding. My—as I said before—my aunt married a man by the name of Sam Wright and they had a mill, which did grinding of wheat and corn and rye and things like that. And they also had a up-an-down saw which was operated with what I told, was a cam (?) to saw the logs. This water was furnished by a race which started up about the upper end of our farm and run up pretty close to the house above the regular Newfound Branch, and on into the mill, where it had a fall enough to turn a big 30 foot water wheel. Well, as I say, most of my days was spent with my mother. And on one occasion she bathed me and put on my little, checked gingham apron. And took me out on the porch and sat me up on a chair. And she pointed her finger straight at me and she says, "Now young man, don't you get out of that chair. I have to go to a neighbor's house, they're not well down there and I want to go see if I can help them. And I don't want to have to dress you again. You are to stay there." Well, of course, as far as I knew, I stayed there, except that the next thing I knew, I was down in the road on top of a bridge that crossed the spillways, in which I could just touch the water with the end of my finger. And I was having a wonderful time slapping the water up and down, until I felt a couple hands come around under my armpits. And I started to scream, "I'm going to tell my mother." And she looked up, and she says, "Yes, you be sure and tell her." [Laughter.]

Well on another occasion, this mill where my aunt lived, was a quarter a mile below us. They had three boys and three girls. Boys was Ron Wright and Everett Wright and Roy Wright, and then there was Roe Wright the oldest daughter, and then they had twins, Inez and Nina. They were just 3 months older than myself. So when I got a little restless or anything, my mother would take me up to the hill, which obscured the sight of Aunt Mary's house from ours. And she'd watch until I got in front of the house, and wave to her that there was somebody at home and I was going in and then she'd go back.

Well, one hot summer day, I went down there, and found them all in the dining room. And I joined them. There was Inez and Nina and Roy, which was the youngest boy, and my aunt had just finished robbing the bees, this was in a hot August day. And had a big wash pan of sourwood honey on the table. And then she had just finished baking a loaf of light cornbread, baked in a iron oven, about 12" in diameter and which

they drew out live coals from the fireplace under it, and then put them on top of the lid and baked this cake of cornbread. Well that came off hot and she sliced off pieces. And there was butter on the table that was beginning to melt. And she said, "You all just help yourselves—there's knives. Just spread your butter on, and then get all the honey you can and have a good time." She was a big-hearted woman. And so we did. And I remember I had on a little cotton suit, which of course had a bonnet to it. And the pants were fastened onto the body. And on the back of this suit there was a couple of buttons and a flap that we used. And I was quite a timid child, and easily embarrassed, and directly I began to have pains in my tummy, and I was too embarrassed to ask my aunt to unbutton those buttons for me. So I decided to go home, to my mother. And I ran very hard, till I got to the top of the hill. And as I told you, there was a branch from right down, back to the house, and if she came out of the house, she'd have to cross, and I'd have to cross it. When I got to the top of this hill, which I had to cross going home, I began to call my mother in very large tones. And that caused her to come out, and we met right in the branch. And I went on down the hill, and she met me at the branch, and she took off my clothes and threw them in, and then threw me in with them. [Laughter.] Which I guess was the best solution to that problem.

Well, anyhow, on this farm I think it would be well to tell you, that we lived pretty well, considering the times, because most every variety of fruit trees had been placed around. We didn't have a regular orchard. But it had a few peach trees. And then we had apples, which would start with the June Apple and then the early harvest and then we had a Black Apple which would come in about September. And then the big Buff Apple. And then in October the Winter Johns would get ripe, which were used mostly for cider, and for vinegar. For vinegar. And then we had the Limbertwig Apple, which we could conserve by putting in the basement. And every day in the fall and the winter…[End side 1, tape 1.]

Side two reads: "Move to Asheville—College Days—Spanish Amer. War—First Job."]

And uh, every day in the fall of the winter, as long as apples lasted, I was supposed to go down and fill up a small tin dishpan full of those apples. And I was always told to be sure and get the speckled ones, because the solid ones would be there tomorrow but the specked ones would be gone. So we'd get the specked apples and I'd take them out to the pump and with my thumb I'd gouge the rotten parts out and after supper about bed time, we'd all have, eat an apple or two. And then of course there was cherries. Quite a number of cherry trees on the place. And, plums, most all kinds of small fruits. And we'd raise a few watermelons that May. Then, of course, as I said the school usually started in July and we'd stake out some young lady, that was along about the eighth or tenth grade, anyhow, she knew more than any of us in the creek there. And for two months, the county paid her. Then sometimes the farmers in the district that had children with colds, and greens and plemmonses (?) and would make up a purse and keep the young lady on for another month by her boarding. And she always boarded around the months of scholars, spending probably a week at each home. Well that went on for sometime, and some of the boys would begin to get up a little bit to where they were

paying more attention to the young school teacher than they was to their lessons. And they went and hired a man by the name of Mack Ballew to come and teach the school. One of the first things that I remember seeing him do, was him and Jim Cole squared themselves off out in the middle of the road with a pile of rocks, and they were throwing great big rocks at each other, and they were standing about 30 feet apart. Well, they were successful in dodging them. But it convinced the students that Mr. Mack Ballew was running the school. So he got them to studying. [Laughter.]

J.J.: You say school started in July?

July, yea, and it ran for two months.

J.J.: And then you'd have the harvest.

Yea.

J.J.: And then you'd go back again?

Yea, and then we'd have the harvest and then this uh, two weeks after that, they'd pay the young lady extra to stay and teach. Well, this schoolhouse was called Zion Hill. As I earlier spoke of it, it was also the meeting place for any community affair, especially the Methodists and the Baptists who had services their regular. And as time went on I began to grow up, and the first thing I knew, I was given a small hoe, and told to come on and help hoe the corn. And the two jobs that I detested most of all on the farm, was in the summer time, they gathered hay. We had a nice level, as I had said before we raised timothy and clover hay. But they put me up on top of the wagon to pack the hay down as they threw it up. And the husks and the seeds out the grain would get in around my neck and where I was perspiring and I got awfully hot and bothered. The other distasteful job was in November when the ground would freeze and my father decided to haul a lot of rocks of the fields. These rocks were just like picking up chunks of ice. And I really suffered.

Now about the fences, we had rail fences that were built in zigzag fashion. And in order to get the rails we had to have one iron wedge and then we made out of dogwood, what we called gluts?. Then we would take a piece of hickory, and little hickory tree about 6 inches in diameter. And we'd start at one end of it and they'd be about 3 feet long. And at one end we'd leave it solid, just like it grew. And then they'd trim it down to where there was a handhold on the other end. And we used that to drive the wedge and the gluts in to split the rails. Well, that was one job that, uh, my older brothers didn't enjoy at all. So my father was kind of a community man, when he had time. He was a Justice of the Peace and he also listed taxes for the community and Mother kept the Post Office which was served from Marshall, N.C. by a man who would ride a mule, starting out very early from Marshall and come up Leicester and up Newfound and across the mountain Turkey Creek and come back down to Marshall all in the same day. Well, on one occasion my father had to go off to list taxes or something, and he took us three boys up and showed us some logs that had come down. And he said, "Now boys, I want you to split a lot of rails. We need a lot of rails to improve the fences." I got 12 rails split, and we heard

some dogs a barking, and we looked down and there was two of the Polty (?) boys, Bud and Harley going rabbit hunting. They were trying to persuade my older brothers to go with them. And they finally give in, by, and promising to come back and help me to split the rails. I couldn't go along, I was too small to go rabbit hunting, so I stayed there and so when they got back around dark, they began to hatch up all kind of tales to tell my mother to tell my daddy about the lack of rails split that day. And Nat told her some plausible story and finally, Gay didn't say much. But next day at the breakfast table, my father usually checked up on what had been done. So he cleared up his throat, which was the signal that he wanted to talk. Well, before he started, Gay said, "Well Pa, I want a tell you what. We turned up trail of the white village (?) yesterday and then we went rabbit hunting and we didn't get back"

Well, he says, "That's all right boys, I'm not mad at ya. I've known all the time that you don't like farm work and I think I've got a way that I can relieve you of it. He says, "I talked to your Uncle John Thrash today in Asheville and he says they're building a big cotton mill there. And there's property there we can buy. If we can sell this farm we can buy there and build us a place where we can keep boarders—your mother and I, and you boys can just have to root hog or die in the city."

Well, that was gratifying in a way and yet it was disturbing. But anyhow—I have to go back a little—and tell you that in the neighborhood, was a couple of Englishmen, Teddy Hall who'd been a sailor in England and John Henry Hall who had never exerted himself to do much of anything. But they had given them money and sent them over to this country and Mr. John Henry was very fortunate, getting acquainted with this family and marrying a red-headed lady by the name of Mrs. Henderson who was a very energetic and ambitious woman. They got them a little mountain place and they was getting along pretty well. They had a couple of oxen for their transportation and power on the farm. And one day Mr. Hall came by and asked Mother if she had a letter for him. She said, "No, I haven't got one Mr. Hall." But in a day or two she got this large envelope, a square one. 'Bought the first one I think I ever saw, in a square. And it had, it was a light blue color, and it had sealing wax. Three or four dabs on the back of it. And finally Mr. Hall came in a day and she handed him the letter. And he sat down and he read it. Oh a man with large features, large hands, large features. And he usually had one of those big pipes that the stem came down and had a large bowl. And he sat there with his pipe in his mouth and he read for some time. And he finally looked up. And he said, "Well Mrs. Green, I have both good news and sad news for you." Well mother says, "Mr. Hall I rejoice with your good news and I'm sorry about the sad news. Just what's the story?" And he says, "Me rich aunt is dead and I'm going to get $40,000. I want to buy your farm and in a few days I'll go to town, when my inheritance arrives, and I want Squire Green to go along with me and we'll draw up the papers."

Also the place where my Uncle and Aunt lived, Mr. And Mrs. Sam Rice, so they took their children and went out to Peach Tree in Cherokee County and started their life out there. And in due time, my father sold out. It was all turned over, everything, to Mr. Hall, except two horses and a three-horse wagon. The two horses, now they used for hauling off the dirt for the excavation of our home, which was 16 rooms upstairs and on a lower elevation was the store room. And I used, he bought me a one-horse wagon, which

I used also for hauling. Made one or two trips out to Fletcher, N.C. to get lime to use in the mortar in the brick building. Well, that all got finished up and we started living there.

My father was able to sell the farm to Mr. Hall for $20,000 cash. Then he had a little place up, further up, back of Mr. Dan Chutes called the Hayes Coals(?), of which I think he got about $500.00 for. So we barged into town. And after the house was finished up then, that was in 1886. And in 1887, the state of N.C. started in with placing free schools in most every city and town throughout the state. And Asheville started theirs by buying on Montford Avenue, a brick building which had been used by an academy for several years as a preparatory school for young people in Asheville. Well, I was very fortunate to be able to line up there on 11th day of January 1887 and go into school as a 14 year old boy. And after they asked me several questions, they said, "Well we'll assign you to the 4th grade. And if you can keep up with the classes, well all right, and if you don't we'll have to put you back and if you're too far advanced for the 4th grade why, we'll advance you." So I struggled along with that until we got through the 6th grade, and the we rolled over to Orange Street. And after finishing the 8th grade, I was given a scholarship to go to Trinity College.

But in the meanwhile, in Asheville, in the summertime and on Saturdays, this one horse and this one horse wagon, played quite a prominent role in my life because I had to feed and curry the horse and hurry home from school. And hitch up the dray wagon and they usually had some orders for me to fill. And then Saturday's I stood on the dray wagon on Pack Square and made a little money that way. Also had a good size garden at our place in Asheville and a plow. And Mrs. Graham, the wife of the cotton mill owner, would ask me every spring to come up and plow her garden for her. Well, I would and when I was finished, she'd come out—she was very gracious, lovely lady, fine Christian lady, a member of the Presbyterian Church—she'd come out and compliment me on the plowing and talk nice to me and ask me how much the charge was. And it usually run 35, 40, maybe 50 cents and she'd pay me that. And she say, "Now, that goes to your father doesn't it?" And I said yes, I have to give that to him. And she'd say, "Now here's 25 cents for you." Now that was a big thing in my life. And along with it, she would always say, "Now Ottis, you study and you work hard, because someday you're going to make a big business man." Well that was quite a joke to me. I laughed hardily at it. But she said, "Now you take it seriously, you will be." Well, I thought about it many times, and I was fortunate in seeing her many times afterwards and I always thanked her for her confidence. The family now, the older brother had gone to Norfolk to work awhile and he came home pretty soon and was sent to Nashville to the Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee and he studied medicine. And as soon as he finished there he went to the state of Washington, from there he went on down the coast—because it was too cold and rainy up there—and he went on to San Francisco and saw an advertisement of a doctor who wanted to sell out his practice down at Watsonville, CA, a hundred miles below San Francisco. And he spent the rest of his life in California.

Well, Gay got a job with Mr.—Cotton mill owner—Mr. Graham painting some houses. And after awhile the storeroom at home was vacant and he and a lumberman put up $200.00 to put him in business in the grocery business. Well, it went on for a couple of months. This lumberman would come in every afternoon and evening and tell Gay what to do and how to do. And after it run about three or four months they took stock of it,

and found out they hadn't made any money. So the fellow said he'd like to get his money out of it. And Gay, says well I'll give you my note and I'll pay you every Saturday night all I can and guarantee to pay you it all in two months. Well, he paid that back and from that he went on and found that they had a grist mill out on Dick's Creek had gone on bankruptcy. And he got Mr. Rankin of Battery Park Bank to loan him money enough to buy it and then he was in the milling business. And then for a while he turned over his grocery store to Hyde (?) a couple of boys who worked for him. And he went to California and run a hotel for awhile. But he didn't like it and he came back. A man by the name of Johnston run a furniture store on Patton Avenue. And he heard his widow wanted to sell out. I had been working in Durham for four or five years after I got through Trinity College. And so he and I bought it out and started Green Brother's Furniture Store in 1903. And in 1905, I pulled out of the furniture store and bought out the remnants of a hardware store and started at 25 Broadway in Asheville. And then in 1908 I bought out the W.A. Boyce stove and tin and shop at 11 North West Pack Square and moved in there and operated the Ottis Green Hardware Company there, until I was taken sick in 1954. In 1956 my son was taken sick and I had to close out the store.

And now, going back, in 1907, I was married to Miss Alleene Broach in Meridian, Mississippi on May 15, 1907. Well the way I met her, was, here in Asheville, I had several friends, Mr. Don Gillis, Mark Brown and uh, John Young. And we associated together a good deal. And Mr. Gillis was very apt at our meeting new people who came to town, and then if there were any attractive girls in the crowd, he would make the arrangements, and take some of us down, either one at a time, or sometimes all of us, depending on the number of girls they had there. So one evening he told us that, some visitors here from Meridian, Mississippi, she was visiting her aunt, Mrs. Gillium at 276 Montford Avenue, and had with her, her cousin, Mary Ezelle. I remember that there were either three or five of us boys who arrived there. And they were all sitting out on the porch, except, one was at the piano, playing and singing. And we spoke to everybody, was introduced round. And I said, "Well I believe I'll go in and turn the music." So I went in, and Aileene Broach, and she seemed to accept my help graciously, and we met several times, which resulted in our marriage in some couple years later.

[Ada Gilliam, widow of P.T. Gilliam is listed at what was 79 Montford in the 1904-05 city directory.]

We got married in Meridian and we came up to Chattanooga, TN and stopped there at the old Hotel and made the --? trip down over the, up the tramway to the top of the mountain. Spent the day looking at the city and in a couple days, we decided we'd just come on home. So my mother, with the aid of my brother's wife, Aunt Effie had cleaned up one of the rooms and made some special arrangements for the bride and groom. They received us very happily and we lived there for about 4 years after that. At the house down on the corner of Roberts and Buxton Street. The house I just told about building here in town. I continued to go to my business early and work late. In the course of time, we had a daughter born on the third day of February 1908 and we named her Marion (R.) ? Green. And she grew up very lovely and three years later on the 1911 on the 14th of March, we had a son born, Ottis Jr. Then I began to look for a little house to live in, as the business was beginning to show some signs of continuing. And we found a place at 84 Church Street, a little one-story house there that was very convenient to churches and

schools and the store. And I bought that and lived there for some 4 or 5 years. The first school that Marion went to was the school down on Beaver Street. And the next year after that, about 1915, I bought a home on Montford Avenue, #288 Montford Avenue. And we moved down there and have lived here every since.

Now one thing I want to tell about the lives of the children on Church Street. We lived next to Jessie and Connie Coston. Mrs. Coston was the oldest daughter of Mr. John Henry Hall who had bought our farm on Newfound. And she kept a cow. And my wife was not as much experienced with housekeeping as Mrs. Coston. And Mrs. Coston was a big-hearted and a good, kind neighbor and woman and she kind of took my wife under her wing. And also the children. They had a son George who were about their age, and other children they played with.

[Jesse P. and Constance Coston are listed in the 1910 city directory at #92 Church Street. He was the president of Asheville Harness Company.]

And another playmate they had was Dr. Charles W. Byrd, pastor of the Central Methodist Church, which was just about a block above where we lived, and he lived about a block above us. So many afternoons, he came down and played with my children, sometimes having both of them on his big broad shoulder at the same time. Well, as time, of course they soon entered his church and Sunday school. But in the meanwhile, before they came around, my wife and I had joined the Haywood Street Church down on the corner of Haywood Street and Patton Avenue near where we lived in west end, the original home. Well time went along, and things worked out well.

Now we find it expedient here to return to early life on the farm at Newfound. Because there's many interesting things that we've glossed over. Now in addition to the ? Hill, where we had this meeting house and church, every fall the Methodist had what they called Camp Meeting. They'd taken a piece of level ground, about a mile out in Leceister there at the beginning of Turkey Creek. They built a big log arbor. Probably 50-60 feet wide and probably 100 feet long, up a slight incline so everyone could see the pulpit from their seat. And that was built with posts, log posts and log joists. And then, at first it had kind of a thatch roof with birch on it. But later on they put on shingles, made boards out of white oak, using a --? --? splitting these boards out about ½" think and about 30" long and they were nailed up there in such a way. And it seems that the action of the weather and rain on this white oak caused a kind of a little matting or a little moss or something like that that seemed to fill up all the cracks. They were unusually good roofs that seldom ever leaked. Well around this arbor course it was always built were there was a good spring, so water would be plenty. And then, a row of houses would be built on either side and across the back. And the front part, where people came in and parked their wagons, it was left open for people to come in. And they were cut off into sections, kind of like tenement houses. And my mother and father had one on the right-hand side, about half way of the length of the building. And these buildings were probably 400-500' long and maybe that far across at the other end, where the buildings were. And in there was kind of a little reception room where you stepped in. And for the first floor we used straw. They also used straw in the isles and in the arbor. And they had a little ladder that went upstairs. And there was a room downstairs with a built up bed, some probably 15 feet long filled with straw in ticks. And the same upstairs. And the men went upstairs and they just piled in there one right—in rows right along there together.

And the women slept downstairs the same way. And we always carried along a stove to do the cooking on. Most of the cooking was done at home, as much as it could. They'd bake bread, and boil hams maybe, and take as much as they could with them. And everybody was welcome to come in at mealtime and help you eat. And the good cooks always had a lot of company.

J.J.: How long did you stay there?
Well we'd stay there always for two weeks?
J.J.: What time of the year?

Well that was always in the fall of the year, right after the harvest time. Right after corn was gathered and before it got too cold. Usually October was the best month. The latter part of September or the first of October. Then there was camp meetings on holiday where my grandmother lived. Sometimes we'd go over and visit them on the weekend. And, in fact there was two or three on Hominy Creek, being more level land on Hominy Creek than there was on this Newfound Creek.

Now there was one phase of the early life that I passed over and I want to tell you about it now. And that is how our contact with Asheville, which was our shopping center. And that was about 11 miles from our farm, or our farm was about 11 miles from Asheville. And in those days, people were moved to let you make a road on any ground which they could raise corn, wheat, or crops of any kind. You went as straight as you could, and you went across mountains. For instance, if you go out from Asheville now, we had to go across Gravels? Mountain, and of course now you go out to New Leicester Highway almost level. Well then it went on down across Gammon's Mountain and the next place we had to go over was a mountain and I think we crossed three pretty good sized mountains from Asheville to Newfound. Well now I'll teach them the song to Asheville (?), was not made any more frequent that we could because there was no kind of gravel or anything we could put on the roads. They were just made through fields and had mostly red clay mud especially in the wintertime. And it would usually sometimes come up to the axle. I've seen horses get—lift their foot out of the mud till they'd get so tired they'd just, steam rising on them, they'd just stop and rest until they got feeling better. Well, we had, father learned to raise some of this hay he had at surplus. And he found that he could sell that to professional men in Asheville who kept a cow and a horse. And we could haul, with four horses, we could haul a thousand pounds, for which we could get, varying on the economy, it was anywhere from 15 to 20 dollars. And after we drove up on the square and waited for somebody to come buy it, then we had to take it and put it up in their loft. And I was usually assigned to the loft to throw the hay back—pack it back in there. And my father throwed it up off of it. Well, by the time we got that done, and got back to the store and bought some sugar and coffee and maybe some thread and needles or pins or something that was needed for the farm—maybe a little piece of calico, but on many occasions, we'd take the wagon with the bed on it and maybe haul some apples and things of that kind. And my mother would go along and take some spare butter and eggs and things of that kind, which she was able to barter for calico and sugar and threads, whatever she needed.

And, now these trips, we would start, we'd usually get up in the morning at home—of course in the fall and the winter the days were short—we'd usually get up 5:00 in the morning, feed the horses and mother would feed us breakfast. And we'd get started and

we'd usually get to town about 11:30-12:00. Well then, by the time we had our little lunch that we'd carried along with us, and Mother sold ahead, it's getting late in the afternoon, and we'd start home and usually get home anywhere from 9:00 to midnight. And it was quite a hardship.

I'll never forget the first little Ford automobile I bought in 1911. I went down the, the weather was dry, and the roads were dry. And I said to mother I want you to go with me to Newfound down to the old home place and see just how long it will take us to go. And I think we made it in 30 minutes. And she said, "Well it's unbelievable and it's too bad we had to be deprived of that transportation all our lives and had so many hardships on the road."

Let's see, I don't believe I've described to you yet, the house that my father finally finished. The kitchen was the same old log house that was there when they first went to housekeeping. But he built this log house, two-stories, and about 30 or 35' long, and ? in the middle of the house, it was a typical house built back in the early 50s and 60s. You see a few of them occasionally in the country now. As a matter of fact, the house that my father built, starting in 1868 is still standing and in good repair. Anyway, you enter in a hallway, and a stairway went upstairs. To the right of the hall door was a spare bedroom downstairs. On the left side with the living room, was a fireplace. Matter of fact, we had a chimney at each end of the house with a fireplace both upstairs and downstairs. But in the left end there, where we lived, they had their bed. Now this bed was made out of maple wood, out of a piece of…

[End side two, tape 1.]

[Tape 2 marked "Last pt. of 2."]

…pieces of timber about 4 inches square. And they had got it to some place where they could turn a round knob, a post about 4' high. And then of course it was connected with wooden sides and wooden ends. And it was a regulation length, where it was a little over 7' because most of us were 6' long and wanted plenty of length to the bed. And then, instead of springs, we used about a half inch either cotton or manila rope. And there was holes built—bored—in both the piece that held it together at the head and at the sides. These ½ inch holes, and this rope would go through there and was drawn just as tight as two men could pull it and knot it. And then the straw tick was put on top of that, and then a feather bed that was put on top of the straw tick. And that was the bed we had to sleep on. And all the other beds in the house were similar. And there was two upstairs over the living room where we boys lived, then the upstairs room over the company's room—the spare room—was used for storage sometimes or maybe Mother had the loom in there, which she wove the cloth that made our clothes. Now at the end of the stairs, coming up, was an attic that went back over the one-story kitchen. And that was used, in the fall of year, it was my job to gather the walnuts and hull them and put them up there to dry. And sometimes, the neighbors got together and killed a beef, and they would take strips of this beef and hang it up there so it wouldn't spoil. And we'd have dried beef during the year. And now all of this furniture. I'll tell you about the one in the living room. All of this furniture was handmade. And my father was pretty adept and sometimes he got somebody that was good with tools to help him. Well they made the beds, and then he made a chest of drawers, with I think, 3 large drawers and then a couple

small ones across the top, which is a regular pattern. And then he made for my mother at the Post Office a little rack there to put the letters in and a place, a drawer to keep stamps and records for the Post Office. And then our chairs, of course were all homemade, usually out of turned white oak rounds and they used split white oak to make these split bottoms, which lasted quite awhile. Sometimes a little rough on children maybe, but that was the kind we had. And then, they usually had one or two homemade rockers. There was very little furniture to be sold in Asheville. Usually they got it from cabinetmakers or some person who spent their life doing that kind of work. Now the kitchen. In the kitchen, we had a large homemade table and we also had a corner cupboard made of cherry wood, which my father made, and it was very nice. And of course we unfortunately we thought it was not nice enough to bring to Asheville and we give it away or done something with it. If we had it right now it would be a most valuable antique. But the dining room table was just homemade planks put together with turned legs. And at first the only thing they had to cook with was an open fireplace with pots and pans around that. And they'd draw the fire coals out on the hearth to bake the bread and put coals on top of the lid. And that's where I used to use my little apron to run out and get some bark and chips right quick to help them get ready by the time the hands come in for their dinner.

Then there was this corner cupboard, come in as a very useful thing one time, when my father was wanting to buy a piece of land. And he went to Asheville and came home with a couple hundred dollars in a little cloth bag. And when he came in, he said to my mother, he says, "Now Laura, I don't want'a see this anymore until I call for it, and I don't want anybody but you to know where it is." Well, we came home from church the next day and we found that the house had been torn upside down by a couple of men who saw my father get the $200.00. And we tracked them across the mountain in the snow. Caught them, and they were punished of course. But the money had been put back of a cracked plate that was standing in this corner cupboard. And no one knew where it was but my mother. And when we came home from church and saw the house had been ram sacked, the first thing she did was to run to the corner cupboard and come out with the little bag of money.

Well, I think it would be good idea to tell you about how she made her clothes. Course we had our own sheep, which we sheared twice a year. And of course the wool had to be thoroughly washed and cleansed and at first we had what we called wool cards. There was a little block of wood, two blocks of wood, about ¾" thick, usually made of maple, with a couple of handles fastened on the backs of them. And on the front was sharp spring wire, and you'd take the wool in between that and you'd pull it back and forth. And that would break up the wool and make it very soft and very pliable. And you'd work it down until you got it into a very small roll. Then you took this roll, she did, and you'd take it to the spinning wheel. Operate the spinning wheel with one foot, and catch the ends of these little rolls of wool onto the end of the spindle and that would twist it, twist the thread, twist the cotton, and make the thread. And she'd join on one to the other until she had a nice length of thread. That usually was then taken and dyed, whatever color they wanted. And then they could buy a cotton warp, which fitted the loom, which she had, and this thread then would be twisted again and spun, and put on shuttles. Put in little rolls and on the shuttle. And she had to knock that shuttle back and forth. There was no automatic way to put that shuttle through the loom. She had to knock it with her

hands. And that way, in her spare time, she wove the cloth. And usually when we got up—I don't think I ever had a suit that she made out of that cloth. I just ever had some makeshift clothes but for the older boys and her husband, she would have Mr. Schartle, a tailor in Asheville, to cut it out. And she took home and sewed it on a little bitty sewing machine which was clamped to a table and she turned with one hand and sewed—guided the sewing with the other. And that's the way the clothing was made.

[John W. Schartel is listed as a tailor at 47 S. Main in the 1896-97 and 1899 city directories.]

She'd also would weave some wax—some flax—sometime to make towels and different things.

J.J.: Is it literally true that the only thing that had to be purchased, the only thing that wasn't actually produced on the farm, was such things as sugar and salt…?

That's right, the only thing we had to buy was sugar and salt, coffee, horseshoes, and tools, yea. Father always had shovels, picks and mattocks. And after he got his hay going, he bought a horse-drawn mowing machine—two-wheel machine—like you see along a road now with a tractor pulling it. But he had two horses. And then they used a hay rake, which was drawn by one horse. And sometimes I operated that after the hay was laying on the ground after mowing, we'd come along and rake it up. Get it in what we'd call a windrow, clear across the meadow. Then when it was fairly dry, they'd go and make a shock of it. And after it still dried a little more they'd make a stack or haul it and put it in the hayloft over the stalls for the stock.

J.J.: Now was that before the time when tobacco was grown in this part of the country?

Yes, I remember some two or three years before we left the farm, we hear of these people in Madison County raising tobacco and making money. Some of them, Madison was pretty hilly, and country rough, and some of them would make enough money to come up around Leicester and buy much better farms than they had down there. So when tobacco was being introduced, my father went and employed a man by the name of Rogers. He had two boys and built him a log cabin up the branch. And they cleared the land, and we had to build a barn then to cure the tobacco in and built of logs and chinked with mud and a kind of a couple flues, one on each side of the barn, with some tin pipes running back around through it. And we built a fire around front in the fireplace, and the heat from that would go through and cure the tobacco. Course there was a door there and they had a thermometer and they had to watch it. Took a day or two and they never could let the fire go down. So it was necessary for someone to stay right there with it from the time they started the fire, until the last. And the last part of it, they had to get the temperature way up to get the proper cure on the tobacco. But we didn't find it very profitable, and I think we abandoned—maybe the last year we were on the farm—we discontinued the tobacco.

J.J.: Well I know there wasn't anything such thing as central heating and I guess that fireplace downstairs and the stove in the kitchen were the only sources of heat.--?

That's right, no stoves of any kind. And even in 1905 after I went into business, in the hardware business, one of my biggest items was heating and stoves, both sheet iron for wood, and cast iron, big old pot belly stoves for heating stores, churches and school houses, things of that kind. That was before central heating came along. And when I

bought my house at 288 Montford Avenue in 1915, I was able to get a man to install hot water heat, probably the first time it had ever been in this house. So things were pretty crude and rough in the early days.

Now I think it'd be well for me to go back to the education and religious side of my life. Course I attended services both at the local church and where we had the school and also camp meetings. But I was never particularly impressed with accepting Christ as my Savior and joining the church. And about, I was about 15 or 16 years old and going to Orange St. School, I dropped in one night at a revival meeting down on the corner of Haywood and Patton Avenue—called Haywood Street Church—and there I accepted Christ, and started to live trying to live a Christian life. Well I found that most of my friends in the school, children and all, belonged to Central Methodist Church, so I joined up there. And went there to Sunday School and church and was very happy in it, because they had a wonderful Sunday school teacher, Mr. Harry Lindsey who run a curiosity shop in Asheville. And the superintendent of the Sunday school was Mr. Hezekiah Gudger, a very fine gentleman who had been born and raised in Madison County and got a good education and moved to Asheville and was a prominent lawyer, and later on become ambassador to one or two different countries. Well, then when I went to Trinity College in Durham in 1892 I took my membership to the Trinity Methodist Church in Durham. And also my education, as much as I had been able to get, was gotten as I told you, in the Montford Avenue preschool and also in Orange Street. And I entered in the fall of 1892 the Trinity College. And I found Dr. John Crowel, a man from the north, was the president. And they had brought from Old Trinity, up in, in another county, they had brought some of their old professors down there, the Professor Peagram, whose son—he was a physics teacher—and his son went on to be one of the ones who was prominent in the splitting of the atom. A number of very fine young men were studying the ministry. And I went on for a year, and came back home in June 1893, and spent the summer working for a brother and went back to Trinity College in the fall. And they had invited me to play football. Well, I was a little afraid of it, because I was a little tall, and maybe not as agile and as alert as some of the boys. But anyhow I joined in, and after we made one or two trips to Raleigh and played Wake Forest there, one time, and then we played the N.C. State College there once. And then we had one or two games with the University of N.C. on our home ground and played once over at their place. And in practicing for the game with the University of Chapel Hill, I fell across one of the players and another man fell on my leg and I got a severe sprain to the knee, which laid me up for a couple of months. And meanwhile, that threw me entirely out of classes. And when Christmas came I wrote my father to see if I could get money enough to stay on the Spring for a term of school. And told him to see Mr. Hezekiah Gudger who had promised to furnish me money if I ran out. Well, he didn't need to go see Mr. Gudger, because my father had been appointed to lay off Mr. Gudger's estate, which was a little different from the present bankruptcy state. So about a week before Christmas, I had been going around on crutches, and I laid the crutches down and got me a good walking stick. And I started to walk downtown and my earthly possessions, which was a few old clothes and 50 cents of money. Well, I felt pretty blue for a little while. And walking down the street towards the center of Durham, I suddenly was accosted by a young man, who I used to know as a night clerk in the Swannanoa Hotel in Asheville. And I kind of woke up and I said, "Oh Mr. Keen, how are you?" And he said to me, "Where you

going?" And I said, I don't know. I don't have any idea. [pronounced "idée."] I don't have anywhere to go. "Well in that case, how would you like to come and work for a couple of weeks at the hotel in my place of night clerk, while I go onto school?" And I said, well, Mr. Keen, I think the lord sent you after me. So I went there and worked for Mr. Hallcob (?) in the Carolina Hotel. A hotel which, Mr. Julian S. Carr had built. A very nice up to date hotel for that time, because there was no other hotel in Durham that was nice enough for his friends that would come there to see him on politics, and at that time, he owned and operated the Bull Durham Tobacco factory. And that was about the time that Buck Yuke? started in to organize the American Tobacco Company. So it was my good fortune to meet all those people and I worked there, was transferred from night clerk, to steward, and worked there until 1908. *[Did I type this correctly? Date is incorrect and he says later in the tapes that he left Durham in 1898.]* And I decided to come back to Asheville to live. And again, I had the same luck that I did finding a job in Durham. One day I dropped into the Berkeley Hotel. And Mr. Eugene Bearden who was in one of my Sunday school classes at Central Church was the clerk there. [End of recording on this side, which was only taped about half way.]

[Back side is not marked but it is recorded.]

[Tape begins: "Because the solid ones would be there tomorrow, but the specked ones would be gone." Appears to be a re-recording of what is on first tape marked Side 1 Early Childhood.]

[Tape 3, side 1 marked: "After college-Young Bus'ns-Religious Exp.-Eliada Childrens Home-Early Medicine-Early Hotels.]

…getting ready to go to the Spanish American War. And Gene said to me, chances are that he would have to go because he was a member of the local militia and they were being called. And that they were going to move up the night clerk while he was gone to take his place while he was gone, and they looking for someone to work as night clerk, while the night clerk acted as a day clerk. So I went to work again in a hotel, and had the same luck as I did in Durham. And Mr. Bearden came back and they pulled some six months --? I was transferred—and the steward left, and I was then their steward, and I was the steward until 1905 when I quit it to go into the hardware business.

In the mean while, when I came home, as I said awhile ago, I found out that church down at the corner of Haywood and Patton Avenue had been taken over by, what was known of as the Southern Methodist Church at that time, and that my mother and my grandmother, and, well my whole family had joined there. So, naturally, instead of going back to Central, I moved my membership from Trinity Church in Durham back to Haywood Street Church. And attended service there since that time. And during that interim, I've been on the board of stewards, acted as chairman for several years, and also, now, one of the trustees. But had the great pleasure and joy of knowing the ministers and their families.

And along about 1903 or 1904, I was down at my mothers, in this West End, and she told me that a crippled man had come in their and was doing a wonderful work among the cotton mill families, that worked in the cotton mill. And his name was Compton— Lucious B. Compton. And that he was also holding service in a little church that had been abandoned by the Southern Methodist Church when they went up to Haywood

Street. So, Sunday night, I went up to hear him preach. And to my joy and delight, being a merchant, he preached particularly on honesty and uprightness in people and paying their debts, and being good to their neighbors. So I was so impressed with his earnestness and all, that I offered him a little change, and he accepted that. And after that, he visited my store frequently.

But, in the meanwhile, he found a woman who had come in out from the country, some 30 or 40 miles, and she started drinking out there, and she came into town. And the only name people knew her by Carolina Peabody. She'd usually wear a long heavy linsey skirt, and would dance or sing, or do anything for money enough to buy whiskey. And one cold night, Mr. Compton happened to be out on the streets and he found her piled up on the sidewalk, unconscious. And he took her down to a place near where he and his wife were living, which was down the lower end of, it was Hull ? Street, down the lower end of Patton Avenue. And he got these people to take her in. And the next day, he rented, without any backing at all, and he started furnishing it through the grace of some of the neighbors, that would give him anything they could spare. In the way of bed clothing, and I think he got a bed from somebody. And he started a rescue home for women there, and called it Faith Cottage. Since that time, it has gone on to make homes for unwed mothers, during their confinement. And literally thousands of young women have gone through it and gone out to a life in usefulness, in church work, preferably, and in homes, and has become as good citizens as anyone could be.

He also found a lot of children who were being abandoned. One of their parents would be there, and then the other would leave them, and he'd find them around in different places. So he got another home and started a children's home in it.

Along about 1905 he started a camp meeting down on Leicester Highway on a farm owned by Mr. and Mrs. MacIntyre. He put up a tent there and started preaching. He was a dynamic preacher. In his early days, he was a crippled boy and lived out in the mountains in Haywood County, and his father was a local Baptist preacher, but his brothers made their living bootlegging.

And this man I'm talking about starting these places, had one day sold some of the liquor and he didn't want to turn the money over to them, so he went to come down to Asheville—caught a freight train—and kept drinking the liquid himself. And he finally wound up in Cincinnati. And like all other boys that run away from home, he'd become unwont, and found himself in a rescue mission up there. And a wealthy man took him out to his house, bathed him, gave him some clothes and give him money to come back home. He wanted to come back and straighten up everything. He started studying and through his own efforts, educated himself and made a minister who held revival meetings, beginning usually in the spring at Los Angeles and going all the way across the country, winding up in NY state late in the fall. And he had started this children's home, and besides being evangelistic, he would tell them about these children back in the mountains. And contributions started coming in, and most of it from his ministerial work outside of Asheville. He got very little help from people here in Asheville. Out where he had this camp meeting, the MacIntyres gave him 5 acres of land. And he built a house on it and got started. And he started out then to put out a main building. Well the money came in, and he succeeded. And he always had a tent meeting. This tent meeting he turned into a camp meeting, which he built an arbor for there in part of the land where he

had good sloping ground, so that everybody could see the pulpit and the minister. And he advertised free room and board for the length of the camp meeting, which was ten days or two weeks. And as time went on, he built a big dining room and then he built cottages. Then they'd sleep in the main building of the children's home. And they'd come from everywhere. People would come from Idaho, they come from Wisconsin, they come all the way from New York State, and S.C. and all over the south because it was held 1st of August—vacation time. And a lot of people didn't have money, but they'd leave in their will that a certain piece of property would be sold and turned over to Compton's home. So along in the early 20's—and by the way, my mother used to like to go over there and camp with them and stay the whole—during the whole period. And of course I visited also frequently and I became very fond of Mr. Compton. And he invited me to go on to his board of trustees. At that time there was a man by the name of Uncle Charley, who used to come down from New York State and work with the little boys. And then he got disabled and couldn't come. And then he invited Mr. Aldrich from Greensboro to be on the board. And then his wife. And a Mr. Green who had volunteered to come down there as his secretary and look after the place while he was off on these preaching missions and he was on the board of trustees, along with himself as president. Now this went on for many years, and the thing prospered and my two brothers gave them money enough to build a memorial to my mother called the Laura Green Children's Building. And others chipped in and now the—in the last year they have increased a number of trustees and got some very active busy men who think in big terms and they raised between $250 to 300,000 to put up a modern dining room and cottages to house 30-40 children in, so it would be more like home life than it would in big buildings where they are all mixed and mingled together. So it is going. But Mr. Compton passed away with cancer in 1947. And it fell to Mr. Tom Black, who had come on the board as a trustee. And they asked me to act as chairman of the board through the meetings and I soon found that that expanded to quite a bit more than just acting as chairman of the board meetings. And Mr. Black was very wonderful in helping me, along with his wife, but unfortunately, Mr. Black had contracted heart trouble and he passed away in the early 50s. And then we began to enlarge the board, and we called Mr. Arch Cameron as a manager and as a director of the office.

[Archie C. Cameron is listed as the director of Faith Cottage for Girls in the 1961 city directory.]]

And they're still going and growing. And he has a class of the best singers in the college and they make a 2 months trip going north through VA, Maryland, NY, Massachusetts, back around through OH, and he'll wind up the end of this month—July 30th he'd be back home with this singing group. Now, they'd get a great many people interested in the orphanage, and helped to support it. People here at home have become greatly interested in it. One of our local wealthy ladies, the daughter of Senator Robert A. Reynolds gave $40,000 to build one of the cottages. So it's very gratifying to me to see how the place has grown, particularly since I have been unable to be active in it. Others have gone much farther and done better than I have.

J.J.: Did Mr. Compton name it Eliada?

Yes, he named it Eliada Orphanage because in the Bible he said Eliada was an orphan who needed help. The child by the name of—some people pronounce it Eliada—but we call it Eliada here. But he found a passage of scripture where this girl was a child in want. And that is the significance.

Now another thing I should mention, is that Mr. Penny, the great change-store man, gave him some very fine Hereford stock. Two or three young heifers and a bull, and with that they've been able to build up a very wonderful herd of cattle out there. And at one time, he bought about 400 acres of land surrounding this orphanage, which produces hay and grain of different kind, and they have enough milk to give all the children pure fresh Guernsey milk and give the surplus to Biltmore Dairy. And in many ways it has been a work that has grown through the help of the Lord, and depending on Him for his blessings, it has grown and done ever so many thousands of children—it has put them in a good way of life. And they express the fact with the youngsters as soon as they are ready, to become Christians and to devote their life to Christian education. They have the first grades, first two or three grades are there on the grounds, and the others elementary school down on [bad spot in tape]…

When I first remember, living out on on Newfound, the medical care was usually in the hands of maybe a local doctor who had read some medicine, or picked it up them selves, but more particularly in the hands of the housewives who had a common sense medical book. And also the Farmer's Almanac come along, and give certain things as good for certain diseases. And then they had these shovels that would gather up roots and herbs and they'd put a few of them in—the essence of some of them—in whiskey and sell it to you as a good remedy for a spring tonic. My mother was quite adept in a good many things such as first aid, where they'd have punctures or strains or things like that, she'd disinfect them and tie them up and keep them from getting too bad. And the remedy of course for boils, which many people had at that time, she'd get a plantain leaf and wilt it in hot water and put that on, and tie it over the boil. Or a piece of fat bacon, over a bad boil, and tie it up until the next day when it had to be opened up and the poultice changed.

My father was unusually good with any kind of stock he had. He knew how to alter them, and take care of hogs, cattle, and calves, so as to make steers out of them. And then occasionally they had doctors, uh, one doctor at least at Leicester when I was away. And then when one of my mother's brothers, went to the Civil War, went to, first went to University of Pennsylvania to study medicine. About six months before the Civil War broke out. And after typhoid fever set in down in the camps in Virginia, they sent and got him, and he stayed there and nursed them, and never did go back to medical school, but made a marvelous doctor. Especially with the typhoid and most all home remedies. He used to always carry a little bag with Epicake [?] and blue mass and all kind of purgative medicines. And, then, sometimes restrictive medicines. But he was known at the time as a very good family doctor.

["For the bowels one would use either a purgative (laxative), typically "blue mass" (a mercurial compound) if the bowels were tight, or various opiates (such as opium pills or

paregoric) were utilized as anti-diarrheas." From internet site http://www.batteryb.com/sick_soldier.html. Nothing found similar to Epicake.]

J.J.: How did they treat a fever in those days? Did they immediately put somebody to bed when they had a fever and cover them up in blankets?

Yes, they'd have—Well Dr. Thrash, my Uncle Joe Thrash, he was especially good on any Typhoid Fever or most any type of fever and when he went there he put them to bed, and usually just sat down by them, and made a picture just like you see in a great many physician's offices—the old doctor sitting there with his chin in his hand, watching the patient. And then they had midwives that went around and helped deliver the babies. Sometimes a man and his wife would have to deliver their own baby, and get a good neighbor woman to come in and help them to clean up. But the medical part was very poor, however people took good care of themselves, because they had to and if they didn't they wouldn't live.

J.J.: Well, outside of accidents, what were the most feared diseases that were prevalent?

Well Scarlet Fever was one of the great diseases and most people—one thing that helped a great deal—was that people discussed those things. And when they'd get together they'd say, "well somebody lost a child with scarlet fever" for instance, and then they'd go on and tell all the different remedies and everything they'd done to help the patient to get well. And of course measles and mumps and one bad thing was small pox. Small pox was pretty rough during the wartime, on account of the unsanitary conditions of the camps. And one of my mother's brothers had them and when he came home from the Civil War, after he could get so he could travel, he was just marked all over, and never had much energy or strength after that to do any kind of work.

Of course they had now, in the Civil War, John Portnea ? who married a first cousin of mine, had a leg shot off and they cut it off right up next to the hip. And gangrene set in. And some fellow went off in great haste and got a bunch of maggots and brought them back and they destroyed the gangrene and he got well and lived for a great many years after that time.

Another thing they used in the Civil War, I've heard them say, for impure blood and oil and boils was to eat 9 raw sweet potatoes, one each day for 9 years. Now Irish potatoes instead of sweet potatoes.

J.J.: One a day for 9 days? [He appears to be correcting Ottis when he said years.]

One a day for 9 days would cure or purify your blood.

J.J.: Was this raw or boiled?

Raw, perfectly raw. And as late as 1898 living in Durham, an old traveler man came in, who was an ex-Confederate soldier. And we asked him where he'd been? He'd missed one of his regular trips. And he said, well, I'm ashamed to tell you but I had boils. And I waited for a week hunting a remedy, and it finally dawned on me about eating the 9 Irish potatoes. And he says in 9 days I was well and back on the job. So there was something of practical use there.

Well, of course, when the young fellows began to get help in some way to get to medical schools and by 1888 or 90 doctors began to come into the western part of North Carolina. And Asheville soon had a reputation of being a good place for people with tuberculosis, in the low lands, to come up here and get well. One of our first doctors that came here with tuberculosis and got well was Dr. Burroughs who married one of the old Johnny Reynolds daughters, a sister to Dr. Carl Reynolds, who later became a very famous health doctor himself. And Dr. Burroughs came here on a stretcher and got well. And then he persuaded Carl to go and study medicine. And Dr. Burroughs was the first person in Asheville, especially a doctor, to buy him a couple very spanking, fine little ponies, and put them in a very flashy buggy. And he would ride the streets at break-neck speed. And people would laugh at him and said he was only doing it to attract attention and draw trade, because he wasn't that busy at all. That he was just trying to make a show.

Then later on there was Dr. Minor (?) and there was dozens of doctors, some of them still practice in Asheville, who come here with tuberculosis. And then a very famous tubercular specialists came here from Cleveland, Ohio, Dr. Von Ruck. And first started a little sanitarium up on the side of Town Mountain. And it grew until he built the Winyah Sanitarium. And along with the health giving properties of our air and water, and a good boost by the doctors which helped some, he also gave them Cox cereal for a while. But finally somebody came along and discovered a better way to treat tuberculosis and that they could stay home be treated as well as they could here. So Asheville is not quite as busy a health retreat as it was 60 or 70 years ago.

And of course a good many people came to the old Battery Park Hotel and all the other hotels. In fact all through the country in Western N.C. and east Tennessee where they had a good mineral springs. They would such as sulphur, any kind of medicinal water, they would build a long two-story rambling hotel with all the rooms they could pack into it. Some of them pretty small. And they'd build long porches across the front and back, especially if the back wasn't right up against the side of a mountain. And they did all kind of fancy filigree millwork in wood and banisters and all that kind. People would come up from the south and bring their families, and leave them and sometimes go back and tend to the business. But the families stayed up here and drank water, thinking it would help them. However it was a having a good time that helped them, probably as much as the water did.

J.J.: Wasn't there a place out in West Asheville?

There was one out here at Malvern Hills, at Sulphur Springs, run by the Heigler/Hedler [?] Then there was one at Waynesville. There was one out here at Alexander, known as Black's little [?] Sulphur Springs. And Old Dr. Tate, out near Morris, TN, he had a big one. That was a big thing to go to Tate's place. You really got fine treatment down there.

Well, as time went on, as I first remember, we had three hotels. One was the Slagle House on Patton Avenue. And about the same place the First Union National Bank is building a new building. And then down on Biltmore Avenue where Sterchi Brother's place is now, was the Eagle Hotel, and where the Langren is was the Buck Hotel. That belonged to the family --? And most all of them died away. But it fell into the hands of Mr. --? who was the son-in-law of the former owner, and he got permission of the courts

as the executor of the estate, to erect a hotel there, which he did, along about 1911 or 1912. And then he ran out of money, and he went to mortgage it to somebody who'd operate, finish it and operate it. And he found out he had no court authority to put a mortgage on it. He couldn't do that. So, it stood there for several years and was finally sold by the courts for the benefit of the heirs that were living then. And Gay Green and John Lange bought it and built it and operated it for a good many years as the Langren Hotel. After their death it was sold. And I understand their plans now are to tear it down and make a parking place.

Way back before that was built, they built the Swannanoa Hotel down on Biltmore Avenue, which has now been torn down and is a parking lot. The Swannanoa Hotel is very famously known for two—bringing two very wonderful people to WNC who have been, in the past, a very great help to us. Fist of all, Mr. George Pack, a sick man from Cleveland, Ohio and his doctor recommended that he come here. So he wrote Mr. Charlie Rawls who owned the hotel at that time and engaged several rooms for he and his family and one stipulation was that he was to have a bath and inside toilet fixtures installed in his room. Well, Mr. Rawls wrote back and told him that it was impossible to give him the bath and the inside plumbing, however he would be glad to have him come as a guest. Well, Mr. Pack got permission from Mr. Rawls and shipped down here the— so far as anybody knows—the first bath and stool that was ever installed inside the city of Asheville. That was back in the early 80s. Course we all know what Mr. Pack did for Asheville, giving us the old bank building on Pack Square, and gave us the library building and also the park down on Hilliard Avenue. And in many, many ways, which we have no particular record of, him being a help to the people of Asheville and WNC.

Well, then a little later, after Mr. Pack came, Colonel Coxe, a son of a Pennsylvania anthracite coal man, was living over at Green River in Polk County. And he had a four-horse vehicle that they called a Tally-Ho. And there were seats on top where people could ride and see the mountains and see all the scenery, and also, in the case of rain, they could ride inside. Well, he came up to the Swannanoa Hotel, somewhere around the early 80s, with a party of ladies and gentlemen. And they were having, what the hotels at that time, called the supper meal, which is at early evening. And one of the ladies expressed a desire for olives. And Col. Coxe called the waiter, and said would you please go out and bring the lady some olives. Well, later the waiter came out, went back in the storeroom, and came out and kind of stood around first on one foot and then on the other.

And Col. Coxe said, "Boys be careful, where's the olives?"
Well the steward said he's very sorry he couldn't serve the olives because they were not on the bill of fare.

"Oh," he says, "my goodness," he says, "we can't have anything like that. Olives-there's plenty of olives. Please bring the steward in."

Well the steward came in and he said, "Colonel, I'd like for us to serve the olives, but Mr. Rawls, the proprietor just don't permit me to serve anything that's not on the bill of fair."

Well, he says, "Where's Mr. Rawls?"
And the steward said, "Why he's out there in his office."
Well he said, "Bring him in."

So, Mr Rawls was brought in. And Mr. Rawls was a very kind host. And he said, "Well Colonel now," he says, "it's rules of the hotels now and general practice all through this country that when we don't have anything on the bill of fair, we don't serve. In other words we don't serve short orders. People come in and eat what we've got and then maybe the next meal we'll have on there what you wanted for this meal. And that's the way we run our business. I'm sorry, but if I served olives to your table, I'd have to serve it to all the olives --?"

Well the colonel was a big man and thought big and talked big, and he said, "Well, all right Mr. Rawls, you just keep your little olives and I'll come to this town and I'll build a hotel that anybody can get anything they want any time of the night or day that they want it . When the notion takes them, I'll see that they can get what they want."

Well, they thought it was big talk, but Colonel Coxe, wired his lawyer and they came back here and he bought the Battery Park Hill, it was called Battery Porter then, and he changed the name to Battery Park and built there the rambling wooden hotel which burned along in the 20's. But that was built along the lines of most of the hotels, the resort hotels, they didn't have elevators, but they had just usually two-story. However, I believe that Col. Coxe did install an elevator in the Battery Park. And he put a saloon in it. And he looked for somebody to run it who was open-minded man, who was good mixture with people. And he found Major E.B. McKissick down at Aiken, S.C. And he was quite a sport. He was bred horseback rider and attended the horse shows. And, in many ways was a very fine mixture with his fellow man, in favor with both men and women. So, he came and ran the hotel and that caused the livery stables to begin to open up in Asheville. And we had quite a number…

[End of side one of tape 3.]

["Side 4, tape 3 marked: Vanderbilt Hist.—Early Childhoood-First Electricity—City Streets—Early Business."

…have --? up in this part of the country. And Mr. McKissick became very friendly with a young man down there by the name of George Vanderbilt. He was there with his mother. And they went horseback riding down there every day. And Mr. McKissick and Mr. Vanderbilt and his mother. So he insisted on coming up here, which they did. And after they came, Mr. McKissick showed them the view from the south end of the Battery Park Hotel. And Mr. Vanderbilt said, Well I've been looking. I've had in my mind the picture of what I see right here. The Pisgah Mountain and the hills intervening. And he says I want to ride all over this country and see it. So they started horseback riding. And the story is told, by both Mr. McKissick and Mr. Vanderbilt, that when they came to the place where the mansion now stands, he sat there on his horse and he looked at Mt. Pisgah, he looked over the farming there of the Alexanders and quite a number of people who own those big bottoms. And he said, "Well Mr. McKissick, this is the place I've looked for all my life. Let's go back, I want to send a telegram to Mr. McNamee, my attorney, to come down here immediately and start buying land." And that is how the battery Park Hotel and the Vanderbilt mansion, the Vanderbilt holdings, were brought here. Unfortunately—Mr. Vanderbilt was a young man, 26 years old then, and he brought, as you all know, rock masons here from Scotland and Ireland, and people from England to operate his farm, he got shears of cattle from the Island of Jersey. And it was astonishing and amazing to see what he did do. Unfortunately, appendicitis struck him

and he passed away a young man of, I think, just 33 years old. Your imagination can only lead you to see what might have happened if he'd lived to be an old man.

Well now, what I just told you, gives you an idea of what happened in Asheville, by outsiders, up to 1890, all this happened before 1890.

Now we've got to get some water into town. Cause the town's grow'in and they'd been using a big spring—course they used mostly wells, people did—and a big spring up on the side of Town Mountain. They pumped that into the middle of town, and furnished some of the places with running water. But we had a man who'd come here from up in Ohio somewhere, by the name of Major Hawk. The major had retired here after the Civil War. And the pitiful little spring up on the side of the mountain begin to get quite inadequate. And the city fathers was talking about putting a dam across the Swannanoa River. And did where the recreation park now stands. The recreation park uses it for a dam --?, but they pumped the water from there into Asheville in small pipes. But Major Hawk, as I said, begin to walk the town and write articles to the newspaper that Asheville was going to grow so rapidly, that we must go immediately to Bee Tree and build a dam there and bring that water in. Well, Major got so that people almost doubted him on the street, because he'd stop and talk to everybody and anybody about water from Bee Tree, till some of them said he'd begin to be a nuisance. But finally the city fathers woke up and went up and brought it in.

Well, then, they soon found out, along about 1890 they started putting in water and sewer and then they found that they had to go all the way to, to get to the property at the head of Swannanoa, the north branch of Swannanoa there, that was owned by the Connally's, and Governor Zeb Vance had a home up there, and a great many Burnett's. So they had to go in there and plow [ply?], and built a little dam there. And as time went on and Asheville grew, we had to build a big dam. And now we're getting so much water from that, that we're turning Bee Tree into a sporting lake.

Well, it seems now that it's time to go back and start talking about such things as light, and heat, and we've already discussed the water. Now, of course the houses, the only heat we had for houses was wood heat, up until the time we got the railroads in to this country. Of course, everybody cut—cleared their land-and cut up the wood for firewood. And for light, we always saved the pine knots. And father may—that early period, many people would put a pine knot in the fireplace and would turn their back to it, and read, do their reading at night by the light of a pine knot. And then callow candles came along, and the women folks were very adept at making those candles. Fact is, one of the things I remember, that when my grandmother used to come to our house in the fall of the year and bring her old body servant with her, by the name of York, that she and I would make candles, and York would help them kill the hogs and make kraut and sausage, and cure the—salt the hams and the bacon down—and it would always be enough to last us a year.

Well one of the things that I helped as a small child, was help my grandmother Thrash, was to make the candles. And we had a tin mold, which they told me was made in England—very smooth and very nicely made. And there was about—the little molds were about the size of my thumb, and they were eight inches long, and there was six on each side fastened together, and the top of it flared up about an inch where the twelve

were fastened together, six on one side and six on the other. And then this tube held the candle. Came down and the end of it was pulled down with an opening about an eighth of an inch in size. Now through that you dropped the candle wicking and tied the end of it—tied on the outside of these small ends, and you would draw the candle wicking up to the top of the mold, where you had a stick across there, you drew it very tightly so the wicking would—when you poured the hot callow in—the wicking would be in the middle of the candle, where it had to be to give good service. And for that they used the fat which comes from the sheep.

Well that was some help, and then we begin to get tin lamps, brought here from England, and then later we get some glass lamps. And the glass lamps, of course, begin to improve in size and shape. And at night service at church, they had a little tin holder with a tin reflector back of it, which they sat a small glass lamp in the holder there. And that reflected the light so that we could hold service at night. And that kept up for a good many years, until finally they learn how to make chandeliers and set lamps in that. And that all prevailed until sometime in the late 80s, Colonel W.Q. Weaver went down to Graggy and put a dam across the French Broad River and turned the water in there, onto a generator, and the first electricity, of course, was used by some wealthy people to put it in their homes and have it. Had to be wired—that was all something new. And then they built two, they built three towers 125' high and run the electric wires up there and put electric lamps up there, which made just a faint glow on the ground and streets around for some distance. One of them was on Haywood Street at the corner of Montford. One was on Pack Square and the other one was out on Charlotte, about where Chestnut crosses, to the best of my recollection.

Then Mr. Carrier came here and put the dam across Hominy Creek out at Brevard Road and produced enough electricity to build a hotel out at Sulphur Springs, which is now Malvern Hills. And he ran electric power between his hotel out there, which came down, and they built the Carrier Bridge, which is still in that same location. And run his track down the river a piece there, and crossed—and crossed Depot Street and went around up through what they called Mud Cut and came into French Broad Avenue where the Carolina Power & Light company have their barn now. And on up to, then over into Bailey Street, and he had his terminus of this electric car along about where Monteath Filling Station now is. And then he also put a dummy line up the side of Sunset Mountain. And run a dummy out to Weaverville and that gave them transportation.

J.J.: What is a dummy?

Well, uh, dummy is a very small engine that they hooked onto an open streetcar, and that would pull—the dummy engine would pull the car. It wasn't so dumb but that it could pull a hundred people up and down the mountain. It had those special brakes.

I think maybe it's a good idea now to go back to our streets, which were just like the roads in the country that we talked about earlier in this talk. And they were anywhere from 12 to 15 feet wide, and had drainage, either one side or both. And then they had a cross drainage, which was a diagonal indenture in the street so as to run the water across and also was a great hazard to fast moving vehicles. Sometimes it kinda throwed your buggy around a little bit and it was disastrous to automobiles. And so you had to find better drainage for streets. Well along back, about the time the Battery Park was opening

up here, a young man came up from Cleveland Ohio—from Cleveland County—and by the name of Blanton and run a clothing store. [Charles D. Blanton, Asheville mayor 1889-1892.] And in order to get some progress, he ran for mayor and got elected. One of the first things he did was to have Pack Square paved with cobblestones. Small stones about six inches square and they made a bit of sand and put those in and put loose sand in between them to make them firm. And finally that extended all the way down to the depot. What's now Clingman Avenue, it came down Patton Avenue and then Clingman, because some of the carriages bringing passengers into town would get stalled on those streets and made it pretty bad for visitors coming to Asheville for the first time. So finally paving started and then we give a little bond issue and used brick and very hard brick for paving and more cobblestones. Steep streets were always paved with cobblestones so that the horses could get their horseshoe tips in them and stand up on them.

Now, we gotta get back to the railroads. My first recollection about any talk about railroads was back in the early 80s. And we could hear occasionally of the railroads coming in from Tennessee. And they got up as far as Hot Springs, N.C. and eventually up to Marshall, and then coming in from Raleigh and Salisbury, they got to Old Fort, and put in a big camp there. And some very wonderful engineer come along and laid off a magnificent grade up the side of the mountain—which has never yet been improved on, showing that they had wonderful engineers even 80 years ago. And then they finally started digging on what was known as the Swannanoa Tunnel and found they were progressing so slowly that they finally got a 16 yoke team of oxen and hitched it on to a small engine and pulled it up the road from Old Fort to Ridgecrest, and then went back and got a flat car and then they brought some rails and they laid a track from this end of the Swannanoa Tunnel, far enough out there for them to operate this engine and flat car and haul the dirt and rock out. So they were working then on both ends, and it being solid rock and not having experienced men with dynamite and so forth, it was quite a task and took a long time. And one of the heroes that came out of it was a colored man by the name of Mance McIntyre who became the most efficient and proficient handlers of dynamite. His home was on Pearson Drive, at 152, which is now owned by—Mr. Gay Green's home. And there is still fruit trees standing in the yard there that old man Mance had planted. And he was a man with five fingers. But he was the hero of the Swannanoa Tunnel because he had been more proficient with dynamite than anyone else. Well then they finally got that in there and while we was still living in the country along about 1883-4 or 5 the word was set out that the roads had come in across the Swannanoa Tunnel and come up here from Tennessee and would meet down at the depot—the first depot which was built in Asheville, which was across the street from the Earl Chesterfield Milling Company, which was not there at that time. Neither was the Asheville Cotton Mill there at that time. But a great throng of people gathered there to see the first ones come in and meet. And it was a great gala day; people had come from everywhere to see it.

And then on an occasion a little later, they announced that there was a circus coming in through the tunnel, that would land there. So they came back again to see the circus to come in. And way late in the afternoon, they got word, that they couldn't get the elephant—the giraffe car—through the tunnel, it was so high. So they, the whole thing was off. Everybody was disappointed. And unfortunately for the crowd there, there was

a saloon nearby. And everybody who had saved up their .75 for their admission to the circus, took it over and spent it on whisky. They said that some of the—it was early next day before getting home.

And a little later the road from Spartanburg came up and joined at Biltmore and then we had regular passenger service both south and east and west. Well then, they proposed a road out to Murphy called the Murphy Junction. And the state of N.C. issued bonds and also sent all of their convicts up here to build that spur of the road. And there are a good many things about that that I remember very well, because my uncle, Dr. George Thrash lived—the road went within 300 yards of his—front of his house. And what was known as the Devil's Dip, which is just beyond Enka. And of course at that time they put the rails almost flat down on the ground. And it was quite a hill there that they had to go over, and then quite a steep place going down. And the road, they didn't --? put crushed stone between like they do now. They just put down the cross ties and put the rail on and away. Well, they had these convicts in camps all along out there. And they sent up young men, were guarding the convicts, which they had to keep a chain on them all day long. The leg chain was hooked up to a built around their waste. And they worked with the handicap of that one shackle around the ankle, and the other, the piece of chain that hooked onto the big chain when they let them in and out of the camp where they stayed. And they worked that way all day long. And they had young men with double barrel shotguns standing by to watch, see that they didn't get away.

They even slept with those chains on?

Yes, they even slept with those chains on. And the work trains going out there, would get up a momentum coming up the hill along there by Enka, and when they got to the top of the hill the steep place going down, it was nothing unusual for them to have a wreck at Devil's Dip. And that's why the reason they called it the Devil's Dip because it was steep. But of course as time went on, they had through the hill there and filled in the low place until they got a very good grade.

One incident that I recall about these guards, was that my Uncle George Thrash had a daughter, they had two daughters rather that were along the marriageable age, and one of the guards, by the name of Page Pickett from Durham, N.C. courted and married the oldest one, Lilly. And after the road was built, they went down to Durham to live. And then her sister, Cora went down to visit them, and they introduced her to a man by the name of Herndon ? and she married him and spent her life there, and raised her family in Durham. Of course all of them have passed away since that.

Now, I recall now that I have overlooked, when I spoke of the three hotels, I have overlooked the Grand Central Hotel, which M.P. Chedester built there, I guess maybe in the late 70s or early 80s—yes I know it was—my first recollection of coming to Asheville—that he had this Grand Central Hotel where Kress's store now is. And he also run a general store there. And in connection with his hotel he ran a livery stable, which was back of him there, on Lexington Avenue. And also so that customers from his store, could park there horses—wagons and horses—back there, and feed the horses a bunch of time. And if they was able to pay .35 for dinner, they could buy dinner in this hotel. But I remember that my mother always treated S.D. Hall, better known as Doke ? Hall, who after he married one of Canada Cowan's daughters, and become quite a good citizen here

in the real estate business here and has one daughter and one several sons still living here. And he was always very nice and polite, and after they sat on the calico and the soda and salt and sugar. They got all through, why he would put in one stick of peppermint candy for the baby. And that was always very pleasing for me because I was the baby.

And as time went on, the business become very good there and the Grand Central Hotel and Mr Chedester put up the building where the Man Store now is, and run a bridge across the street there on the second story—a walk bridge—and many of his guests would sleep on the south side of the street there, but the main building was on the north side.

In regard to help on the farm, we were gathering wheat and thrashing was a very hard and a very tough job. They usually started very early in the morning, in August, in terribly hot weather. At that time, men, good, smart, quick-moving men could make a dollar a day. Other times their wages was usually .50. Now the roads though—well, my father could employ a man during the summer to come and live in the house. Where they had large families, we'd get one of the boys to come and live with us. We'd give him room and board and $8.00 a month for his work. And his work was usually to get up in the morning, start a fire, feed the stock. Then we got breakfast and he'd put in a full day's work and helped with the stock at night, and helped around the house. If there was anything to do, he was just like one of the family. He had to be useful or they wouldn't keep him, and that saved us ordinary work.

Now on the road, a man had to work a certain number of days on the road in order to keep it up. Or he could hire somebody for which he had to pay $1.00 a day and furnish a shovel. And otherwise, the wages were very low. However at that time, sugar would sell for 5 or 6 cents a pound, coffee was 10-12 cents a pound, a quarter sack of flour you would buy for .75 that's 25 pounds flour you'd buy for .75. Bacon would be 8 1/3 or 10 cents, eggs sold for 8 1/3 -10 cents a dozen. So they couldn't get much for the work, but they could buy more for it. I remember later on when we were living here in Asheville and running the store, we watched the colored people do their shopping. Where they made 5 or 6 dollars a week and paid maybe 3 dollars a week for a room. A man and his wife would come in and they'd stand around. And you asked them what they wanted. They'd talk together and directly say, "Well, give me .10 piece of bacon." All right, we'd cut off .10 piece a bacon. Well then, give us .15 worth of corn meal." For which they'd probably get 15 or 20 pounds. Well same with the flour. They bought 10, 15 cents worth of this, that and the other, and finally got together with their small change. And they had stayed within their budget and was able to pay for it and take it home, and I suppose that was what they had to eat for the week, which was pretty slim rations. Not only was --? get along all right, there was very little charity, very few real poor people—course everybody was poor as far as where the goods was concerned.

J.J.: But everybody could live?

Everybody could live. A widow woman could make a living doing washing and ironing for the neighbors. And there was some of them that would hire girls and take in washing from several families. But on the whole, streetcar fare was 5 cents, a good size bag of peanuts was 5 cents. The nickel was a pretty big thing and up until I guess W.W. I was still able to buy a bottle of Coke-a-Cola for a nickel. Seems that nickels are not only, not

of any very great value now, but are very scarce. Used so many of them in slot machines, because the question of hiring and paying help in stores and all, is uh, has…

J.J.: …what did they pay somebody to work at a store in those days…

Well, they'd get maybe 7 or 8 dollars a week for their pay as a clerk in the store. Course the more efficient ones would get more.

[End tape 3.]

[Tape 4 side 1 is marked: "Side 5 WWI era: Depression—Ashv. Real Estate—Lee Edwards HS built—Ashv. Politics—Ashv. Banking: failures & fore."]

… we had quite a depression, all through the country. And merchandise had been scarce and people had been off in the war and things were in pretty bad shape. So some of our smart people felt that it would be a good idea to start a real estate boom and that would bring back prosperity. It seems that quite a number of people from all over the country, converged on Miami, Florida and got the thing started. And we heard rumors here of how they were trading down there and how much money people were making. And men we had known of being in very ordinary circumstances were announcing that they had people that would handle small deals but they personally were going to handle only the million dollar deals. Well Asheville got excited, the Chamber of Commerce did, and made up a train of 125 business and professional men. And we went down to Miami, and then started from that old estate and went around in this train. And found that people were very excited over the values increasing so rapidly, and pretty soon, there would be no more very attractive property on the market. It would all be bought up. So the idea was to buy quickly and some of it, without down payments. You just give your notes.

Well we came back home, and as so many people come from Florida in the summer time up here to spend the summer, we begin to do the same kind of trading. Property values advanced very highly and very quickly. Banks were very liberal to loan you money and take your notes for most any trade you'd make. Particularly, the Central Bank, of which Mr. Wallace Davis was the president. And Dr. Sinclair was the vice president, and Mr. --? Hopes was a big stock holder in it, Clarence Rankin was the assistant cashier.

J.J.: And Mr. Charles Brown was…

Mr. Charlie Brown was the cashier and Russell Davis was the vice president, brother of Wallace, and they went into it in a big way, they went out to Beaver Lake and bought a big farm out there and started a big division out there. Of course as time went along, we heard the sad news that down in Florida, everything had been closed out, everybody had failed. No body had ever been able to pay for a piece of property—it was all in notes from the bank. And some of the banks failed. Along about 1930, the Central Bank was closed, but in the meanwhile, they had a great many fine people following the Davis's and Charlie Brown and Rankin, who were known to be very high class, Christian gentlemen and good businessmen.

J.J.: And they had some influence with the main administration in city hall.

That's right. They just got the people to pass a bond issue, or got the legislation to give them permission to make bond issues to build courthouses and city halls and schoolhouses. And that's when our big million dollar city hall was built and our courthouse about 2 million. The tunnel through the mountain at the end of the Asheville Expressway, and Lee Edwards High School was built and well, a new bridge was built to West Asheville. Money was plenty everywhere—just everybody. But along about 1930 they begin to close in and want some money, and they found that a Congressman Lee from over in Nashville, TN came over and got all the money and left his notes in place of it. So naturally the banks closed and then they went in to court and Mr. Davis and his brother were convicted because they proved that they had the influence over the others that strayed them to do so. At one time, Mr. Davis's influence was so great that we had a big civic meeting over at the Kenilworth Inn, and everybody was in favor of putting some big project through. And we were enthusiastic over it. And finally someone turned around and said, "Well Mr. Wallace Davis, what do you think of this project?" "Well, he says, we need it, we want it, but we're not quite ready for it." So they dropped the matter, showing his influence. And it wasn't but a little while after that till his bank failed, and showed just exactly why he had poured cold water on the project. Because he knew that the thing would soon fail.

Well, as time went on, the people of the town—we had a commissioner and a mayor of 3 people—a mayor and a public works, and safety commissioners—and they found that they had been very lenient with the Central Bank, (well now wait a minute, let me get my breathalator.) Much to John H. Cathey, who was the lawyer here, he'd been elected as the Mayor and worked very closely with Mr. Davis, and the other two commissioners—I don't remember their names exactly. And then there was Mr. Ed Lyda ? who was chairman of the county commissioners that had the courthouse built, and helped in some of the other projects, that brought on a local debt $54 million. Well the people were so enraged, they just went in droves, and very angrily and led the mayor and the two commissioners out of their office. And set up a temporary government of their own, and put other people there in their place. Meanwhile, the legislature was in session and they drew up a charter—Mr. George H. Wright ? a lawyer here drew up a charter—and went down to the legislature and got it through. Setting up a form of government of 8 councilmen, understanding that the one with the highest vote would be elected mayor. And in turn they were to elect a city manager, a businessman, a run it strictly on a business basis.

Well, time for election come on and several of my friends was to—Frank Smith and Walter Britt, and Wilbur Devendorf, Julian A. Woodcock—all decided they would run. [Refers to the election in 1931.] And then they came and asked me if I wanted to run, and I told them no, I've never had any political ambition. Well, they said this is not political. This is going to be a business government and we need businessmen, and we need you because we know how to work together and cooperate and put the thing on a good basis. Well, I told them I would consider it. So the night that the—of the—closing for entering as a councilman on this ticket, I was sitting at home about 10:00, ready to go to bed and I heard a car drive up in the yard and I went out and here was Frank Smith, Walter Britt, Julian Woodcock, and they insisted on me going with them to the courthouse and entering as a candidate. Well, I just felt that I couldn't refuse them so I went along with them and entered the race. And when the votes were counted out, it

seems that Mr. Woodcock was the high man, and he withdrew his name as eligible for mayor and nominated me, and I was the next highest in numbers of votes cast so I was elected mayor. Well we proceeded to organize working day and night for some weeks and finally decided on Mr. R.W. Rigsby as our city manager. We brought him up here from Charlotte. Well he organized a strictly business organization. Everything in the city was run—there was no favoritism to anybody—everything was run strictly business. And that was the only basis by which you could get anything done by him or his appointees. For instance over at the golf, city owned golf course, they soon discovered that every minister and every politician in Asheville had a pass to play golf on the course without any cost at all to them selves. And the first hubbub started when they were refused and they all come with great indignation to know why they should by cut off. And Mr. Rigsby told them very firmly and very kindly, that they now had a business organization and that nothing was free. You pay for everything. Well, then they came after me about it. And I told them they had to go by the law—that's all I knew. Nothing I could do personally. I had no right or authority to play favorites for anybody. I didn't ask for any favors myself. Fact is, if I parked overtime, I paid my dollar just the same as anybody else. So they finally—some of the ministers quieted down. But there was a committee of women who sat as watchers during every session of the council—open meeting of the council. And were not hesitant at all to heckle any member of the council, or berate them, or anything that they felt like they wanted to do. Well, we got pretty tired of it. I did especially, because I'm not accustomed to being talked ugly to at any time or any place.

So when the election came around next time, they insisted on me running. [Believed to be the 1933 election.] And I told my cohorts that the people have shown very plainly that they did not want me as mayor. And I didn't propose to put myself up to be shot at—torn to pieces—in an election that I knew I couldn't win. Well they felt hurt about it, but they went along and entered. Several other—some labor union people and some disgruntled people got together and they elected a commission which objected to everything that we did. And about four of them, three or four, were on the first commission. Mr. Wickes Wamboldt—line man—and Mr. Cotbourge (?), and Wilbur Devendorf and I believe Dr. Brookshire [H.G. Brookshire]. They were elected for the second term along with some other fellows. And they got Mr. George Hackney to come up as city manager and Mr. Ralph Barnard was the attorney. [Library records have Mr. Clarence E. Blackstock as city attorney and no record of a man whose name sounds like Cotbourge.] So they just kind of slipped back into the old way of doing business. And the next year, why, they, the politicians got a bill through, reducing the council to some extent, and took it over, and put in Mr. Pat Rodet as manager who was a very affable and very honest, upright gentlemen, but had been one of the main men in the big boom and bust. And from then on, we've had city government that has been very favorable to the people, the politicians and so forth. But we seem to get along somehow.

But meanwhile, they first—our council organized a committee of six, known as the sinking Fund, and after considerable study of the $54 million debt, they got in touch with the creditors, the banks that held our notes, and after several trips to New York, they finally were about to accomplish a very good settlement. When we went out of office and the new commission appointed a new sinking Fund committee, which kind of did work out a very good arrangement. And the refunding bonds started selling anywhere

from 25 cents on a dollar up to 333 1/3 cents, paying 2per cent interest for the first 8 or 10 years then goes to 2 ½, 3 and now under the able management of Mr. Curtis Bynam with the committees of good citizens, they have retired bonds way ahead of time and are in a very favorable position. In the next two years, I believe the final date is 1972. But in the next year or two, some of the bonds go up to 4 per cent. But they still have the income from the taxes taking care of it all and working it out in very good shape. Meanwhile they've had occasion to issue bonds for several other improvements, such as the big dam up at the North Fork of the Swannanoa, and they have a 36 inch main to bring the water here. And now we're furnishing water to a very great area, not only here in Asheville, but in places as far out as Skyland, Arden, Weaverville, Enka and quite a number of outlying places. And we still have a surplus of water—so much so, that recently, the city has closed out the Bee Tree dam and turned it into a recreation place.

Well, the bank that did continue on was the Wachovia. And they have grown. And since that time we have had the First National, organized by Mr. June Adams and Mr. Colburn. And we have the Bank of Asheville organized, and they prospered. And, also, the First Citizen Bank. We now have four or five good banks with branch offices out in the outlying sections of the town, so that it makes it convenient for people there. They can also drive in. And it looks like at the present time, with an 18-story building going up for the Northwestern Bank and the First Union National Bank building an eight-story building on Patton Avenue and Wachovia project to start building in the next two or three years on Patton Avenue—we're pretty well taken care of then, in the banking business. And it's all on the conservative basis. Especially since Roosevelt closed them down about 1932-33. President Roosevelt closed down banks all over the country and set up an insurance which every bank can--$10,000 on every depositor, which banks can make arrangements for that insurance with the U.S. government. So at the present time, we seem to have the banking business in pretty good shape.

J.J.: What was it like to be a businessman in the time shortly after the banks failed? What effect did it have on your (? business)?

Well, it slowed down business considerable. I remember several widow women that were members of our church, were completely wiped out of funds—they had nothing to live on. They had to live with their families and sometimes people would make up little funds, and make a friendly loan without any hope of ever receiving it back. But in the business world, it was pretty tough. And the money got so scarce here, that the council voted to issue script in connection with the merchant's association. And I remember Mr. Arch Nichols as president of the Asheville Merchant's Association, and me as the mayor, started signing one afternoon, these script and we signed and signed until about midnight. And I give out and come home. And the next morning, the same thing had happened before. Money was brought in from some other place—I believe Charlotte—same as before. And we didn't have to issue the script like we did in 1907. Now in 1907 we had script and used it.

J.J.: That was the other time that the banks failed and there just wasn't enough currency to handle daily transactions. What was script? Is it redeemable?

Yes, script is something that—the banks took it and guaranteed for every piece of script, was a piece of paper of course. Printed, in my recollection, kind of a yellow or buff cloth

with places there for the Merchant's Association president and the mayor to sign and also for the bank. So the banks guaranteed to return it—to redeem it as soon as money become available, which took some quite little time. But they did, finally, unless there is some of it out as souvenirs, its all been taken care of.

J.J.: So these then were the two big bank failure occasions, 1907 and 1930 and both of them had very wide reaching effects on the economy of the area, and I suspect, not only were individuals wiped out who had all their saving there, but a number of businesses that were doing business on credit, had bills to meet, and had their deposits wiped out, they were in the same shape—course the city and county both. Do you think that these occurrences, especially the one in 1930 which was by all odds the most severe. What sort of effect does that make on people—does it make them less cautious, less confident of the future?

Yes, indeed, the worst effect it had on them—it made a great many of them withdrew their money from the bank, and took it home, and hid it around the house somewhere. And sometimes the house burnt up and they found lots of money—now there was a man here who ran –what we call a hole in the wall—and he and his wife sat around there and sold hot peanuts, popcorn, and candy and things of that kind. They got their money out of the bank. And then after that, they hid it around the house, so that after they both died—the man died first, and the wife lived for several years. And people wondered how she lived. She'd walk all the way from town to the cemetery and carry flowers instead of riding on the streetcar or bus. And people wondered just how she did live? Well, when she died and the executor went down and examined, they found something like $27,000 just stuck around in odd places. And they searched for several days, and every once and awhile, they'd turn up $1,000 or $500 that they'd hid away. A great many were robbed of their money. People generally just lost confidence in bankers and bank men, especially after men of such high character and standing had caused such trouble.

J.J. Well, at the height of the boom when things were trading around pretty wildly, you must have been approached on numerous occasions by investors who wanted you to join them on buying property and holding it for investments. What position did you take on that?

Well, unfortunately, I fell for one or two of their smooth conversations and found myself in possession of 3 pieces of property, and the bigger one, I was able to turn it over to the man who was in line next to me. And he had to pay for it.

J.J. When the axe fell, he was the owner and it was his mortgage that had to stand?

[Laugh] That's right, and the other two I kept for a while and built a filling station on one of them and was able to sell it for about ½ of what I paid for it. And the other I still have and would be glad to take 1/3 of what I paid for it. [Laughter]

J.J. Well, I gather most people weren't so fortunate and weren't able to hold onto their property? It went through foreclosure. Who was buying in at that time?

Well, practically no one. You see, now once and a while where the county gives a tax deed to a piece of property and gives it to a certain party and then gives the name of the original holder. And as I understand now, they sell it for as much as they can and they apply it on the tax, which was never paid.

Now there was a provision made, that people who were unable to pay their taxes after the closing of the bank, why they could buy these refunding bonds for about 1/3 or ½ price and turn them into the county for full amounts. For instance a man holding $100.00, he paid $35.00 for a refunding bond, and turn it into the tax collector for $100.00, which was a great relief for some people.

J.J. Well there was some large companies like Consolidated Realty Company that just took in thousands and thousands of properties and I suspect that they rented them for what ever they could get out of them. And through the years they sold them off and this was all for…

I remember one case there, this Jess Sternberg had given a mortgage on his property and withdrew nearly one million dollars and left here. And that mortgage was finally bought by my brother Gay Green for something like $150,000 and by fixing up some of the property and taking his time and working it out, he was able to make quite a nice little profit out of it.

J.J: Didn't he buy the Ivey's building?

Yes, he bought the Ivey's building. They run the price of it way up into the big thousands, and after they finally got it down and they got all the mortgages off of it and got it to where he could, he bought it at a very reasonable rate. As he did the place where the Kress building is and also the Lerner building.

J.J.: He evidently had been saving his money --? biding his time during the time of the speculative period.

He didn't buy anything during the boom at all. He waited until that was over. Fact is, he spent that winter when they had so much activity here, he spent the winter down in Georgia at his farm and refused to come up, afraid he would be sold something. [Laughter.] So he was waiting for the bargain to come along.

J.J. : Well now what was a safe investment during that period for your money, bonds..

Well there was not anything in the way of property in Asheville that you could buy at the true value. It was all inflated, to such an extent…

J.J.: Well, I understand Mr. J.T. Horney for instance, who had some developments here, used to send buses out around the state, and bring school teachers and other folks up here and take them to Horney Heights..

Pick em up on Friday afternoons, way down as far as Raleigh and Greensboro, bring them up here and take them out in the country and sell them a lot for $400 or $500 and $50 down. And the poor girls and boy put up their $50 and went home and never come back. Some of them never came back, several of them went back to farm land.

J.J.: He never even put in a street or hardly even a stake.
They kind of raked off a place that looked like there was gonna be a street and showed sewer and water and improvements to be put in. But it was never put in.

J.J: Did any people come into Asheville after the Florida bust to invest money in the boom here.

Well some of them waited until it simmered down, until it was in distress, and they they'd buy it at a bargain price. But it was a horrible experience.

J.J. Well it would appear that it's left an impression that's still with us. A feeling that it shattered confidence. I understand that at one time people were thinking of Asheville as the New Port of the south, the playground of the rich, it was going to become a bustling community of great culture and other attractions. I understand someone even developed a plan for a subway. It was to get so big that we just couldn't handle everybody.

Yep, have to have a subway.

J.J.: Was this in the 20's?

Yes, this was during the boom from about 1924, 25, 26 somewhere in there.

J.J.: Do you think from what you've heard and seen, that maybe Asheville had a little more of this than some of the other communities around us?

Oh, yes, yes, it was very—oh I don't think Waynesville, Hendersonville was affected a little by it, but not, Asheville was the ones that went crazy.

J.J.: And not the other big larger cities like Charlotte, or Greensboro, or Winston Salem?

No, no, they didn't have it. Didn't effect them at all.

J.J.: It was just Asheville?

That's right. That was because so many people come from Florida here in the summer time, and so many people here go to Florida in the wintertime. Kind of a interchange of population.

J.J.: Or hysteria.

Yea, hysteria.

J.J.: Well do you think human nature being what it is, and everybody interested in getting what he can, or most people getting as much as he can for as little as possible, do you think we could have a time like that again?

Well, it's certainly to be hoped not, and yet you know, its funny that one generation of people don't profit by mistakes of the former generation at all. They, just like every son thinks he's certainly much smarter that his daddy, and he's not going to have the trouble his daddy did, because he's smarter and better educated, and each times are different. They're just old fogies and didn't know any better.

J.J.: Lets talk about something a little bit different if you don't mind. We passed through a span here that includes three wars in which the country has been involved, actually four if you include the Civil War. Of course this area was very depressed during your boyhood because of the effects of the Civil War. I gather that times were very hard. Then the next one was the Spanish-American War, and I suspect that that one didn't have too much affect around here.

No, the Spanish-American War didn't bother us very much here. A great many of our young people went to it. And were not gone too long—come back and picked up their lives at the place where they left it.

J.J.: And the flow of goods and services wasn't interrupted to any appreciable extent?

No.

J.J.: How about WWI though—that was a long war?

Yes, that was a long, disastrous war. There were a great many of our young men killed, and a great many of very fine young men killed in that war and crippled. Now, the thing that did help us in our economy after that, was the fact that the government built the Oteen Hospital out 6 miles east of town. And they also rented the Kenilworth Inn and filled it full of sick people and that employed a great many people and give employment to women? And also give people that were not able to come here and patronize the hotels, they were able to get rent from the government for the buildings nd that kept them in good shape.

J.J.: Were you operating your hardware business during the first world war?

Oh yes, yes.

J.J.: Did certain material items get in short supply?

Yes—you had to have a priority to buy anything. The priority was based on former purchases. Fortunately for me, the Asheville Hardware Company had failed about six months before the war started and it—there was $100,000 of very fine staple hardware in there. And for the first six months that I owned it, I couldn't sell much because they get it from the regular supply, but after that I practically sold out the stock of $100,000 in the next two or three years. Sold it all, practically all out. And at a price that was prevalent—set by the manufacturers for the same merchandise as before.

J.J.: So at a time when every body else was unable to get a new supply, because you had bought this bankrupt hardware company and had its stock, you were able to continue supplying throughout that period?

Yea.

J.J. Course this attracted a lot of new customers to you, that probably stayed with you there after?

That's right.

J.J.: Now was there a lot of money made out of WWI—profiteering and that sort of thing? People who could get scarce items at highly inflated bootleg prices?

There were a few that practiced it pretty bad. Some fellow, well, one of the officers from the war welfare—quite a number of them were sent here in connection with the afflicted people at Kenilworth and at Oteen. And some of the big officers well had a regular saying that said, you can get anything you want if you've got money enough or if you've got a friend. And at the same time, someone says well what have you been able to obtain lately that you particularly liked. And he said, well I got me a quart of whiskey, but I had to pay $25.00 for it. Well whiskey probably valued…

[End of side 5 of tape 4.

Side 6 of tape 4 reads "WWII—Prosperity in Ashv—Great Flood in 1964—Work Ethic—Hardware Business."

…took the stamps and went and got permission from the commission, to buy wholesale.

J.J.: I knew this happened in WWII but I didn't know it also happened in WWI?

Oh yes, that prevailed. It was more strictly enforced in II than it was in number I.

J.J.: But it was essentially the same type of procedure?

Absolutely the same thing—yes indeed.

J.J.: Now how about the effect of WWII? Of course, I suspect it was even more severe than it was in WWI?

Yes it was in a way and yet one thing that the new inventions and the progress through research which the government set up during WWII has very greatly enriched the country. Now we have been particularly blessed here because they had so many officers that they didn't need. Now as they're discharged, oh we have hundreds of retired Army officers that have come here and are living luxuriously, and most of them are buying and building nice homes on the sides of the mountains, where a good many of the natives don't care to live. But it suits them fine. And our progress in the way of new medicines has been especially beneficial to us. And in foods and merchandise of every kind.

J.J.: Plastics.

Yea, the new plastics and the new clothes that are being turned out by the industries is all just making a wonderful boost in our economy. And it makes it very nice for the people. They get much nicer cloth for their dresses and their shirts and things of that kind.

J.J.: Well this used to be primarily an agricultural economy and I guess it still is to a great extent. What happens to a farm when maybe the farmer or one of his sons that he's dependent on has to go to war, and maybe there's a shortage of the implements that the people need to work to farm? How do they get along?

We got to the point in WWII where the government was helping the people at home. See they didn't do that in WWI, they didn't help the people and they didn't do much for the soldiers when they were mustered out. But in WWII young fellows from the farm—of course the farm wasn't worked much while they were away—but they were able to send their wages home and help the home people. And then if a soldier wanted to buy a piece of property, the government would back them up in it and then they'd loan him money to buy him a tractor and planter and machinery to operate the farm with. So farms that— what farms are being operated now are in much better shape than they were before.

Now one thing has cut down farming in this part of the country very materially, and that is the big Champion Paper and Fiber company at Canton employed around 3,000 people. The American Enka corporation that makes rayon and polyesters and several different fibers for automobile tires and all kinds of things like that, employs something like 3,000 people here on the Hominy section. And then up on Swannanoa, the Beacon Blanket Company and also the Sayles Bleachery up out at beyond Biltmore—employing a great many people and paying them good wages. Now instead of them people farming—young people that owned their own farms—go to get jobs with these people—with these big industries. And then some body wants to buy part of the farm and build them some homes on, the first thing you know it's subdivided and sold off for lots. Now one marvelous thing that's happened is that it has created more people in the community and they've had to build more schoolhouses. All of them have great pride in their churches.

And we go out through the Hominy section and all sections of WNC and we see beautiful brick churches and spires over them, where we once had log houses or weatherboard—wood churches.

So the economy since WWII has advanced very rapidly and very substantially—in a very substantial way and is now in a kind of much better condition than it ever was before.

And our city and county government seems to be in good shape. They have big budgets which are met with taxation.

Now there's one thing that I think I have overlooked in telling the story of Asheville and what's happened here, and that was about the 1916 flood. I don't think I..

J.J.: I think you just mentioned it briefly about washing away Riverside Park—but that's the only reference we've had to it.

Now the first I knew of that, I had been down to Chattanooga, TN to a meeting of the Carolina's Hardware Association which had been invited down there by the manufacturers of Chattanooga. Well we heard reports of the rain in WNC. And on Saturday morning I had caught the train to come home and a good many people that lived in Eastern Carolina and would have gone through here, decided to go around by Atlanta and stay out of the mountains. And it was fortunate that they did, because the train I came in on from Chattanooga from in the afternoon, was the last train on the track for some time. The first I knew of it was Sunday morning about 9:00, I heard—well this thing struck Saturday night with great force along about midnight. And the first thing I knew of—it was about 9:00 Sunday morning—I heard my cook arguing with somebody that 'he'd been away for a week and he was very tired'and she just wasn't going to wake me up. And by that time I heard it and got out of the bed and got there, and it was the sheriff and wanted to get a piece of rope to go up on Swannanoa and tie it to a tree and run a boat out there and try to rescue Mr. Mark Reed's family which was completely surrounded by water.

Well, I got up and had a coil of rope that suited the occasion and took it out there and got them all out safely. But when it came into Biltmore with such force, that as some of the—two or three of the nurses were trying to get home from the hospital that was out at Biltmore—they were forced to climb trees. And the foreman of the Biltmore Farms, Mr. Vanderbilt's farm, Mr. Lipe—Col. Lipe—went up to help them. In the meanwhile he found that it went up into these trees and the thing kept rising until it got four or five feet deep in the Biltmore railroad station. And they kept timber and lumber and stuff come down, beating on the trees. And finally Mr. Lipe's daughter was in the tree with him and he took his coat off and tied her to a tree good and tight. And in the next minute or two he was swept away along with four or five nurses there. Well that came on down, the Swannanoa did and joined the French Broad, and it went, ah, I've never sees such a raging water in my life. We had the Smith Bridge there and the big railroad trestle. Well it just picked up houses along the banks of the river, and swirled them around and take them out into the main stream. And one big house hit that Smith bridge—it was a pebbledash house—and the dust must have been a thousand feet high. I've never seen such a—in this day and time, you'd thought an atom bomb exploded. And everybody hollered that the railroad bridge was going out. Well, I happened to know the man that put in the trussel down at the railroad. And I think he told me that those piers went down

about 24-25 feet deep in solid rock. And with the rails tied on top, they need't worry about that. But the timbers and the water come up to the top of the trestle—just backed up there. And the Asheville Cotton Mill, the water was 6 or 8 feet deep in there. A lot of oil companies had tanks down below the railroad next to the river and it just picked them up and carried them right off down the road just like they were a leaf.

J.J.: I guess people could stand up around the hills on West End or up above Biltmore there and see the whole thing?

Yes, Everybody in town was there on both sides of the river watching it. It was the most disastrous thing, in loss of life and property run way into the millions of dollars. And it took quite a time to build back.

The railroad trestles were all washed away. The water seemed to have centered right over the Blue Ridge and half of it went down into North Carolina and South Carolina and Georgia, and the other half of it went into the Mississippi River. And of course at Knoxville and places like that, they had time to get their people out. But of course the property damage was very heavy.

J.J.: But it started up in these mountains of course and there was no real warning?

The eastern storm and the western storm met there, directly over it. Just emptied all the water that was in the clouds and the winds and down it went. But still on the sides of the mountains, where it washed the vegetation and trees off the sides of the mountains, it was just bare rock. It was a sight on earth to see at first. And now, occasionally you can see where it still hasn't grown back since 1916.

J.J.: Bet it almost made markings out of these mountains, and we've never really had anything comparable to it?

Oh no, we've had one or two little floods that got out of the river bank a little bit.

J.J.: But that's the worse disaster that Asheville ever had of any kind. We've never had an earthquake to amount to anything?

Well back in the early 80's we heard about the earthquake down in Charleston, and there was some little shaking up here. Some people heard it.

Now, at this time in my life at 90 years old in the year 1964, when we look around here now and see the state schools that are teaching people how to do carpenter work and brick mason, and every kind of work now is taught in school. And when they go out with a diploma they're asked to give them an examination to see what they can do.

Our first taste of that here in this part of WNC was the American Enka Co. started up and advertised that they wanted young people with not less than a high school education to work for them. Well, that was a great incentive to young people who at that time when the economy of the country was so very low, that people who had been in good circumstances previously, were really needing work and needing all of the necessities of life. Now when I first got to the point when I was looking for work, along

back in 1890, I was very timid to go into a store or anyplace and ask for a job. And they asked what I can do. I said well I can sweep and I know how to do most anything that you show me and I'm here as an apprentice. And the way we learned at that day and time was by trial and error. If we didn't do it right, why somebody would come along and showed us how and we had to do it all over again.

One of the first places I got work was at a hotel, and the man said that he probably would need a night clerk in the course of a month. But if I was willing to come there and work for him for a month for my board, he'd find some kind of useful work around there for me, so that I'd be able to earn my board. And I accepted it. And the first thing he did was to take me into a room that was piled high with furniture that was all scarred and marred, and he gave me some sandpaper and some varnish. Told me to go rubbing the marks off the old furniture, and when I got it all cleaned up to let him know and he'd come back and get me started on varnishing it.

Well, I got along very well in that way, but in the meantime, I had an opportunity to go to school, so I left there. But I had made an acquaintance there, which served me very well a year and a half later.

J.J.: Now was this in Durham?

No, this was here in Asheville.

J.J.: What hotel was that?

The Swannanoa Hotel. And I met there Mr. Keen, who was the night clerk, and spent a month there making an acquaintance with him.

Well I fortunately got a scholarship to Trinity College when it first moved to Durham in 1892. And I had saved up $150.00 and I went down there. And I got through the year pretty well, skimping and saving and doing without all of the luxuries of life and some of the necessities. But we got through and got home and I was able to make some more money that summer and return to Trinity College in the fall of 1893. Well we seemed to get along pretty well. I started playing football along with the other fellows. And we had a game with the University of N.C. and one at Raleigh, which was called A.N.N. College at that time. And we also played one game with Wake Forest. And unfortunately, I had an accident and got my knee hurt. And had to lay in bed for 30 days until I could walk again, which I did with a crutch. And that brought me up to Christmas time. And in the meanwhile, I had run out of money and made an application to my father and asked him to go over to Mr. Hezekiah Gudger here in Asheville and see if he could get me money enough to stay on to the spring term. Well, I got the message back that Mr. Gudger was in financial straights and that the whole country was in financial straights and there was no money to be had. Well, when I got this letter, I was very despondent and discouraged. And I didn't want to stay in my room, so I got up out of the bed and got my walking cane, and went hobbling down towards the center of Durham. And I met up with this Mr. Keen, and he asked me where I was going, and I told him I had no idea where I was going, that I was just going somewhere. And he said, well he said I was going to hunt you because I'm going on a vacation for Christmas, and I want you to cover for me. Well, this is one time when the lord sent you after me, and I'm

certainly glad to meet up with you. And I worked at the hotel as a night clerk for about a month, and the man that they had regularly employed came back and I was transferred to the kitchen and dining room. And I served there from Christmas 1893 until, I think it was May 1898. Well I got my first check for 20.00 a month for working in the hotel, and I looked at it and it looked like a pretty good sum of money. It was very important to me, so I went around to the bank and got them to cash it and deposit $10.00 of it and give me some change, which I used judiciously, until I got another one and then I put another ten on that and so on until I finally felt that I had a secure job, and one of things that I had desired all my life was a bicycle. So I proceeded to put $700 in that which took all my money.

I wrote home to my parents and told them I had bought a bicycle by saving up $10.00 a month. My father wrote back and he said well, I'll make this suggestion to you, if you'll save up $10.00 a month and send it to me, I can buy a lot here for $125.00 and then for $375.00 I can build you a house on it that will rent for $8.00 a month. Well that seemed like a pretty good proposition, and each month I'd send the $10.00 to my father. Well it wasn't long until I had the $8.00 as well as my ten going on to it, and it wasn't long until we got it paid for.

Well as I said in 1898, I left Durham and came back home and looked around for a little while and didn't particular hunt work, but was in need of it. But finally one day I dropped into the Berkeley Hotel to talk to a friend of mine, by the name of Eugene Bearden whom I'd met at Sunday school at Central Methodist Church. He said, by the way, you've been working at a hotel. I said, yes. Well he says, I think we could use you here in a short while. And how about it? I said, I'd be very happy to get to go to work. I've been loafing about a month and I haven't been feeling well. That's one reason I came home from Durham. So Mr. Bearden, who was a member of the Home Guard of the National Guard—the State Guard—was called out to go to the Spanish American War, and I was put on as night clerk there. Well, in the course of a few months, the war was over, and he came back and it looked like I was faced again with looking for work, when the steward at the Berkeley Hotel quit and Mr. Loughran, the owner and proprietor put me in there to work.

J.J.: What were the duties of the steward, if I may break in just for a minute?

The duties of the steward—course I was more prejudice at Durham than, I thought I'd learn something about it. But the duties of the steward is to provide the food to be served and to make out the menus along with the chef and to employ dishwashers and cooks and assistant cooks. And of course we had a headwaiter, and in conjunction with the head waiter we would employ the side waiters. Well, that brought us up to about 1899, and we got along pretty well. We were saving some, and I bought an old house down on Mondford Avenue at the corner of Soco and Cullowee, which looked like it was about to fall down. And the children had been sliding down the banks and kind of an eyesore. Well I got me a brick mason and had him build a wall around it. And then I got me a carpenter and had it patched up and a painter and painted it. And the first thing I know I had some income coming from that. And as time went along, my brother Gay, who had left Asheville a few years before, came back to Asheville about 1902 or 03 and he was looking for something to do, when a man by the name of Johnson, who ran a

furniture store on Patton Avenue—near the old—about opposite to Church Street—had died and his widow didn't want to continue running it. [The 1900-01city directory lists Mrs. Laura A. Johnson, the widow of J.B. Johnson operating Johnson Furniture at 43 Patton Avenue. The 1902-03 lists the business as the Green Brothers Furniture and also as Green's Furniture House. Ottis is still listed as a steward at the Berkeley Hotel, where he also resided.] So my brother and I went in partnership and bought it. And we weren't certain that we were going to make good furniture men, so temporarily I stayed on at the hotel and spent any spare time that I could—from the hotel—at the furniture store. And I seemed to like it very much and was successful at making a few sales. And in the meanwhile we seemed to be taking hold all right.

They had three undertaking establishments, all of them in financial distress. There was the Thompson Company and the Hare, Bard & Company and the other company was the name of Brown, and they were—the Thompson Company was in the building where the S&W Cafeteria is now, and the Brown Company was in the Drhumor Building which is now the Wachovia Bank Building and they use—there was a partition through middle of it and we just used the right hand side of it. The Hare, Bard & Company was down on Biltmore Avenue and we ran that on for awhile. [Listed in 1906-07 city directory at 37 S. Main, which became Biltmore Avenue.) Well, Mrs. Brown was the president of the Brown-Green & Co. Undertaking Establishment, and they elected me as Treasure. Well, it seems that Mrs. Brown became very dissatisfied with being the president-she wanted to be the treasurer. She asked the question how she could get to be the treasurer. So we figured up about how much money I had in it and how much money they had made since the business had started up. And she bought me out and she was elected treasurer. Well, I was still active in the furniture store, and my brother Gay had several other businesses. He was selling real estate, and he had a grist mill out at Juno. And I noticed that the funds were all being kept in the same little wooden cash drawer. No account of where it come from or what it was—it was all in one lump sum. So I become dissatisfied anyway that I was not considered much to be in the executive part of the business and I began to look for a business. And I hadn't any particular kind of business I wanted to go to. I thought probably grocery store, because I'd had some experience in the grocery. And I tried to buy—interested in one or two, but didn't succeed. One day we noticed that Penniman Hardware Company had been running a cost sale for sometime and they had advertised that they wanted to sell out the rest of their merchandise in a lump sum. Well, I went and looked at it and they said they had figures there showed that the cost of the goods in the place was about $4,000 for it, but they would take $3,200 for it because that's what they owed, and they had to have that much money to clear it. Well I decided to buy it and I went to my brother and he and I made a trade, and I got my money out of the furniture store and went into the hardware business. Well if you notice up to this time, including this trade, that all of it was not thought out deliberately. It was all by chance. Just took a chance of getting the job at the first hotel, and then it was a chance that I got the job in Durham, and then also here in Asheville at the Berkeley Hotel. And by chance we found the hardware store and I knew nothing about it and didn't consider what it meant to operate a hardware store. The only thing was that I bored it out. And they had a very likely young man there working for them, and after I had acquired the business, I asked him if he would remain on with me. And

he said, "Oh no, I'm going to Idaho. I've put in a claim with the government out there for 165 acres and I'm leaving tomorrow."

And then they notified me that the–one reason they were selling out because the man who owned the building the business was in, had to have this building for some other purpose. So it seems, in taking chances, I was quite a victim of my own chances. Well I happened to go down to 25 Broadway and found a vacant store there that had the rear end of a grocery sale that had gone out of a business. They had $25 or $30 worth of groceries, and they said if I'd buy them they'd sign the lease over to me. So I had to buy the groceries. [Laughter.] And then I had to hire somebody to help me move, and along came a hefty man by the name of Buckner. Said he was a blacksmith and he was also a carpenter and he'd help me move and also get fixed up.

[Possibly Jacob H. Buckner who is listed in the 1906-07 city directory as a clerk at Ottis Green Hardware.]

Well back in those days, hardware meant bolts and nuts and screws, horseshoes, ox shoes, plows of different kinds for farmers, and wagon tire, which had to have a bend because there were so many different sizes of wagon tires that you had to heavy bend built out of 2x4 lumber in squares of something like a foot square and it must be about 12 or 15 feet long, with 4 or 5 squares all the way back.

Well, Mr. Buckner was very helpful to me and got started and I soon found that my delicate hands which had been washed frequently in the hotel, was getting pretty raw and I was boarding with my mother and father down on Roberts and Buxton Street and when I'd get home at night, my mother was good enough to bind them up like she'd been doing out in the country all her life, helping people that had sores and afflicted in other ways.

Well time went along and we added heating stoves and cook stoves, both of the coal burning and wood burning and also oil. And I was able to get a very good type of oil heater, called a Perfection, made by the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. And, uh…

J.J. You were able to get an exclusive franchise to sell them in this part of the country?

Yes, they'd sell them to me literally, and fortunate picked up the agents for the Monarch Range, which was a very wonderful one. Well I found that my having been around the hotel, and acquainted with the traveling man, was about my biggest access. When they'd come to sell me something, I'd throw myself entirely on their mercy. I'd say you know I've been in the hotel business, I don't know anything about the hardware business, I do want to make a success of it, and I liked to caution you that any merchandise you sell me which is not sellable in this part of the country would have to be returned. Because I don't know what's sellable and what's not sellable, but you do, so it's up to you and your company to protect me.

Well, I found some pretty energetic salesman that I thought was my very special friends, and the first thing I knew I found that they was just having a picnic. And so, in the meanwhile, hadn't been in business more than a year, a man by the name of Massey, who had worked for the Bell Naught Hardware Company, a wholesale (?) concern in Louisville and from whom I was then buying quite a number of articles—came in and said he'd been in Asheville sick for several years, but he was now able to get out and

he'd like to work just in the mornings in light work. So I told him I thought that would be a wonderful reason because there was a lot of things in the front of the store that needed rearranging up and straightened up and getting in better shape and better order. And Mr. Massey begin to go through the stock and show me things there I had that had been sold me by my special friends that were not salable and had to go back. So we got boxes and as he went along, he sorted them out, and when they came back in we turned it over to them and got credit for them. I'm thankful to say, they were mighty nice about it.

[Assumed to be William E. Massie who is listed in the 1906-07 city directory as a traveling salesman and in 1909 as a salesman at Ottis Green Hardware.]

Well, I found that my having been born and raised here in Buncombe County and living in Asheville and the Leicester section, a great many people were friendly and came to me. And I showed unusual interest in them and also in trying to please them and give them what they wanted and needed. And I found that they were coming back, and first thing you know, getting along pretty well.

[End side 6, tape 4. Beginning of tape 5, marked Side 7, The Hardware Years.]

There was two other stores in Asheville when I—two other hardware stores in Asheville when I went into business. There was the Brown-Northup Company and the Asheville Hardware Company, which was owned by a Richmond, Virginia wholesaler. That was on the corner of Biltmore Avenue and Pack Square right where the Plaza Theater is now. And after I—I knew all of them because I bought things from them for the hotel. So one day I met Mr. Northup who had come here from way up north somewhere, and was a very competent hardware man and a very nice gentleman—but a man who was very anxious and very eager to sell. And he stopped me and he says now—I'd only been in business 2 or 3 days—I mean 2 or 3 months—and he said now there is one thing I want to call your attention to and that is the three hardware stores here have been cutting prices to get business. Now these farmers have a way of coming to town and they'll go in and ask the price of a keg of horseshoes or a keg of nails or whatever they want. And they'll be very nice to you and say well all right, now I need those and I'll be back directly and you just give me your best price. Well he'd give them his price but he would never see him anymore and they heard later that they'd bought them somewhere else for a few cents less. So I said, well Mr. Northup, I'm very glad that you told me that, because I want to keep up with what's going on and I want to work with you gentleman. But I said first of all, I said the law of self-preservation is bearing down very hard on me right now. And I set the price that nails and horseshoes are selling at the present time, I wouldn't cut two cents of the price off either one of them to get to sell them, because I have to go down and I'm the only one in the store that can go down and get a keg of horseshoes or a keg of nails on my shoulder and carry it up and put it on the wagon. So I'm certainly not going to make a slave of myself and loose money doing it.

So I sat down as far as the price cutting on our part—they'll be none. Well, he appreciated that and talked very nicely and then he said, well, by the way, we're getting a car load of horseshoes pretty soon, and I assume that it will be difficult for you to handle a whole carload, so how about just giving us the specifications for the sizes you need and let them come in our car and we'll give you the carload price. And I said, well now that's mighty neighborly. Well I met up with a Mr. James, from the Asheville Hardware

Company and had about the same conversation. So we soon found that the three hardware stores were working together and saving each other money, and as far as I know, no price cutting was never done.

J.J. Well how did you determine the price of goods? Did the manufacturer have a suggested retail price?

No, they didn't. You, in other words, in a keg of nails, if they cost you around $2.65 or 2.70 a keg, that is set down in your warehouse, you'd be lucky to get $3.00 a keg (or pound (?)) for them. If you made .50 or .55 cents on them you were all right. And the horseshoes were even more expensive—you got something like a dollar a keg on them.

Well the plan run along with me, and we had one customer, Mr. William Johnson who was a very scientific farmer and owned farmland out in West Asheville known as the Johnson farm. And soon after I went into business, he came in and told me that he had written the government and gotten specifications for making a land roller to plant wheat. And that he'd be needing a lot of bolts and so forth and for me to see that I had a good stock of bolts and so forth. Well, he came in one day, and he never would let anybody wait on him. He waited on himself. One of the first self-service customers I ever had. It wasn't like the present day when you can't get anybody to wait on you. We stood by and watched him and tried to help him but he didn't want any help. Well, he worked for about an hour one day, and finally he turned around and started out. And I said, Mr. Johnson, did you find what you wanted? He says, "There's something the matter with this stock of hardware here. It's not --? stuff." "Well," I said, "please sir come here and show and tell me what you mean by that, I don't understand what you mean." He said, "Well you've got 7/16th bolts here buy you haven't got any 7/16th washers to go with them." "Well," I said, "couldn't you use a ½--" "No sir," he says, "I'm not going to use anything but what's supposed to go on there, and you'll have to get your stock of merchandise balanced up so people can get what they want here."

Well, it was a disappointment that he walked out on me, though a sale of bolts didn't amount to much, and I—but it did make a lasting impression on me. And from that day until the last day I was in business, that thought never got away from me, that my stock of hardware had to be balanced up. If a person came in and a woman wanted to go into housekeeping, and she wanted cooking vessels, she'd need all the different sizes of pots and pans, and she'd need cook forks and cook spoons to go with it, and it was up to me to buy them and see that it worked out all right.

Well, I stayed down at 25 Broadway until 1908. There had been quite a serious depression during 1907. Things got awfully dull and low and they were very discouraging. But they had a tremendous cotton crop down in South Carolina. And a gentleman came up and he and a real estate man walked through the building and did a lot of walking upstairs and downstairs. And two or three days later the real estate man came back and I'd been paying $50 a month for the building which I thought was adequate, and certainly with the circumstances I was in. Well, they notified me that beginning on the second month after that, the rent would be $100 a month. Well, that was another one of my mistakes—I hadn't gotten a long lease on the building—and I was in distress again. And I did as usual. I started walking. And as I walked by Carmichaels

Drug Store, which was at the corner of the square where the new Northwestern Bank is going up now, Dr. Carmichael called to me and asked me to come in the store a minute. And I went in. And he says, "Well I see you're getting started in the hardware business down on Broadway." He says, "How are you getting along?"

[Bad spot in tape. Missing part of sentence.] …and I hope I'll do better. Well, he said, "I own a half interest in the W.A. Boyce over there,"—which was at number 11 South West Pack Square and Mr. Boyce had died about six months before that. He says, "I own a half interest in it," and he says, "between my brother's store and looking after that business, I've got just a little bit more than I care about tending to. And how about selling you that business and moving up here, because you're a little out of the range of the drop in customers where you are." Well, I fortunately didn't have a lot to say. I said, well, I'll tell you what I'll do Mr. Carmichael, I'll go over there and look at the stock and I'll look at the building and I'll find out what I can rent it for. Well he says, "I've got a lease on it for the next five years for $100 a month." And he says, "In addition to that, we'll renting one of the lower floors down there for $25, so it brings it down to $75.00 a month."

Well, I said, now lets go look. So I went over and looked it over and they had a connection with it, a big tin shop. They had contracts to put roofs on, all the way from Chester, S.C. to Murphy, N.C. Had a crew of some 15 to 20 men working there and it was a pretty busy thing. Well, I went back and talked to Mr. Massey, and he said the move up there would really give me an opportunity to do some business.

So, uh, next thing, I had to borrow some money. And I went to Captain J.P. Sawyer who was president of the Battery Park Bank, and told him the deal I had on. And I said, I think I want to borrow just about $2500. "Well," he said, "I'll loan you the money, but he said I want to caution you right now, you'll go broke in that place. You'll loose everything you've got right in there." I said, "Well Captain," I said, "if I'm going to loose everything I'm going to make in there, how come you say you'll loan me the money? That don't sound right."

"Well," he says, "you'll pay the money back to us all right, whether you make it there or where you make it, we know you, but he said, that's not a good trade for you." And I said, well I thank you very much Captain, unfortunately, I said the trade's made and I've got to go through with it.

So with that in mind, we went back and took stock, and I took it over, and with that, I got the agency for the Wilson heater, which is the best selling wood and coal burning heaters that ever was made up till that time. I also got a line of ranges, steel ranges, that was a very popular price and was a big seller.

Well, Mr. Massy was very helpful in planning and having the sales made, and I looked after the moving and the heavy hard work, and we finally got started. They had a Mr. Proffitt there who was bookkeeper for the Boyce Company and the tin shop. Went right on. And I soon found however that the tin shop didn't particularly fit in with my way of doing business. I had assumed, or burdened myself with the thought that every customer must be a satisfied customer so he would come back, and that he would also bring or send some other friend with him.

[Howard B. Proffitt is listed as a bookkeeper in the 1911 city directory for Ottis Green Hardware.]

But, ah, these workmen in the tin shop didn't always do a nice neat, clean job. And instead of—people come in an complain about it, I'd turn it over to Mr. ? Johnson ,who was the foreman. And he'd try to satisfy them by telling them the work was done the best way they could and there was nothing to do about it. But they'd come back to me and say we're not pleased, and we're not pleased the way Mr. Johnson is treating us. He's telling us that our works all right and we know it isn't all right. Well sometimes I'd go out and try to satisfy them-talk—but I noticed I wasn't creating any friends. So I announced pretty soon that the tin shop had to go. As fast as we cleaned up the materials we had on hand, why we closed the tin shop. And we lost money on the job at Murphy and the one down in South Carolina. And I was very glad to get rid of the tin shop. However we did continue to sell a great deal of sheet tin and sheet metal and Cortright shingles, which was a very fine metal shingle made up in the state of Virginia. And they made a very beautiful shingle. So all in all we got along pretty fine.

J.J. Well did you have all the starlight tools and the. . .

We found that---we soon was able to get the Stanley Tool Rule & Lumber Co., which sold to any and everybody. And handled that line because it was good. We had the King ? line of knives which was wonderful, until I was able to get the Robeson line which was a much finer line and a much --?-- ? line. And then we got the Ware Aluminum Company and we looked for the highest and the best standard hardware and kindred lines that we could find anywhere. And we also looked for a popular price line and when people came in and decided the higher price was too much, why we had the other line there to handle them. It wasn't long until I was able to get the E.C. Atkins line of handsaws which had been greatly improved over the Distant ? Line and they sent a demonstrator here at the time they were building the Asheville ? Collegiant School, and he spent two or three days out there showing the carpenters about the saw. So we had a tremendous sale on them. And I noticed that when we moved out of 25 Broadway the Asheville Hardware Company moved in down there with a stock of merchandise. And in great distress, one of my friends came to me one day, and he said, "Mr. Green, I'm awfully sorry for you. You certainly have played the wild card(?) in moving up here in this corner." Well, I said now, that's just too bad. I said what is it, what's the trouble? I haven't learned about it yet. "Well," he says, "Asheville Hardware Company is putting a line of hardware down there, and they say with their store up here and one down there they're going to squeeze you out." And I laughed heartily. And the man said, " Mr. Green you must be crazy, to receive a message of that kind, and the way you are, you're acting kind of crazy." He said, "I thought you was a pretty descent kind of a guy."

I said, well you give me a little time—give me a year or two here—and I'll tell you what I'm going to do. If I'm squeezed out, I'll come and work for you for a while and just for room and board. Well they laughed about it and went on. But I noticed several things happening which seemed to be much in my favor. And one of them was, that one of my friends from out Western --?, Mr. Dave Cole, was a friend of mine and he had been since I was a child. And he came into see me one day and he says, well Ottis, I haven't bought any hardware from anybody but Bob Long over at the Asheville Hardware Company in years. And he said I'll need a few things and I'll go over and get them from Mr. Long. Well, I said Mr. Cole there will certainly be no hard feelings

because I know that you'll be treated right. Mr. Bob Long is a personal friend of mine, and he's a thoroughly honest, upright citizen, he knows hardware and he'll treat you right. Yes, he says, he's been treating me that way. He said do you honestly think everybody aught? I said yes sir, that's the way I think about Bob Long. And he says ??, I'll just buy my hardware right here from you.

Well, a few days later, the man at Richmond who held a mortgage on the Asheville Hardware Company, came over to the front of my store, with a man. And introduced me to him as a farmer from up along the Swannanoa, and he said Mr. Green, here's a good customer of ours, a cash customer, and he says, he wants to buy some stuff from us, but the first thing he wants to buy is a good rural delivery mailbox, and we don't have one on hand today. So, I shook hands with him and took him back, and sold him the box. And I said, well now, I presume that you're going back to the Asheville Hardware to buy the rest of your list of hardware. And he says, well I don't see any reason to. I see what I want right here. And you've been so nice to me about this, I don't see any use in going back there. So, he spent $17.00 with me. And several little things like that. And the traveling men began to be unusually nice to me. And if they had any specials they'd help me with them. And I would go through their catalog and buy any and everything in their catalog that they had that we thought we could sell, which was unusual. Over at the Asheville Hardware Company, James would make out a want list and he'd look that over and if there wasn't anything on there, well he'd tell the traveling man he didn't need any thing and he'd go away disgruntled. [Assumed to refer to Claybrook James who was the general manager of Asheville Hardware Co.]

Well, time went on till about 1913 and a lawyer friend of mine, Charlie Lee came up to the store to see me. Charlie had been helping me with a few little legal matters. And he said, Ottis, I got a big deal on for you. He says I'll make you a lot of money. And I said, Charlie, I don't know why you'd come to me special. What about it? He says, well this Asheville Hardware Company over here is being closed up in bankruptcy. And he says the Battery Park Bank has a big mortgage on it and they want to get their money out of it. They want to get all the money out of it, so he said, they have sent me up here to tell you if you want it and you need any financing, they'll do it without paying any mortgages or tying up any of their property. I said tell them it's too big of a deal for me, I can't handle it. He said, now he says, you're just foolish, you can handle it. And he says, we'll back you everyway in the world. So I got to thinking about it and at that time, in 1913, the price of hardware company and dipped to the lowest it had been in 20 years in the U.S. And they went to the time and trouble there to write to everybody, every deal --? that they had, every manufacture they had hardware from , give them an inventory of what they had on hand and give them today's prices. And when it came back, it all amounted to $100,000. And they had to put it up at auction and I bid .60 on the dollar, and the next highest bid to me was .55 and that was the Brown-Northup Company, so I got it. So I took that and I bought the store building down on Walnut Street, and moved what they had in a warehouse down at the depot, put it in down there, opened up a business. Then I begin to move the stuff from the Pack Square store across into mine. And for a while I didn't get much business. But the World War broke out a year later, hardware became scarce and hardware went up and I had to hire extra clerks to wait on the people that come for the hardware. And in the course of three years, the building I was in was put on the market for sale, I had paid the $60,000 and had begun to

accumulate a little more. And I bought the building for $75,000 and finished paying for it in the next two years. So as Mr. Lee had told me, I had made a big deal and been quite successful in that part of it.

Well, after I bought out the Asheville Hardware Company, we had been doing quite a little bit of wholesaling. The traveling men would go up into my store and ask if I was going to continue their wholesaling. And naturally I would say yes, and that I would like to get them on my list of jobbers, to which there was a margin around 25% difference in merchandise, which was well worth trying for. So something like a year I guess after I went in business, the wholesalers or jobbers meeting was holding a meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana. And several of the traveling men suggested it would be a good idea for me to go down to that meeting and they would introduce me to the head men in the business. Now I was able to get the agency for the Winchester Rifle Co. and the Winchester Arms Co., which was a big asset to me. And to quite a number of—the Stanley Tool Co. put me on their jobbers list. And quite a number of things that was very helpful to me. And at our store on Walnut Street we handled a good many farmer's things, such as plows and farm tools, hoes, rakes, shovels. Another big item in that period, was that they had learned that house flies came mostly from barns and livery stables and they advised everybody from the health standpoint to screen their house. Well there was the Continental Screen Company made 3 or 4 different grades of screen doors, and there was about 4 different sizes of doors. For instance, a 2 x 6 and 6-6 door and 2 x 8, 6-8 door and a 3 x 7 door which was standard doors with the buildings. Then there was ½ screens which were adjustable to fit in the window, the bottom part of the window, to keep the flies out. So we sold a carload each year of those. And also farm tools, such as shovels…

J.J.: What were the screens made of? Was that galvanized?

At first, it was iron wire painted. They they begin—and they also then started on a copper wire, which was very expensive. And then eventually they got the galvanized, but now they make aluminum, which seems much better than any of them.

J.J.: Didn't they even try plastic one time, was that during the war?

Yes, during WWII we had plastic screening, which was certainly a great nuisance because it would put out of shape. It was no good at all. And ah, we were fortunate not to get put? Too much in, well there was no hardware we could buy of any kind during WWI but during II they learned a whole lot of tricks and substitutes that if you weren't careful you'd get stung pretty bad sometimes.

Another time during the depression in the 1930s, carpenters and painters and everybody was out of work and hungry and turned to making little gadgets that we would sell for them and help them out. And time went on, we begin to notice after WWII that the hardware store was changing very materially. Automobile tires taking the place of iron wagon tires and automobile accessories were taking the place of such things as used to handle for horse and buggies. No more buggy whips? Used to sell a great many buggy whips. And old black snake whips. But that all went out with the coming of the automobile. And then after WWII as I started to say, electric appliances began to come

out in great quantities, so that the oil and the stove and wood—uh coal and wood stoves—there was practically no sales for them at all. Then there was refrigerators and washer machines, and while we didn't go into any of them, we saw that that was the trend and our old fashioned hardware store was fast going out. And today it is difficult to find a store that handles the class of goods that were popular and salable when I was in business. I guess the nearest to it is Morrison's who still cater to the farmers and country people. And but most of them have gone to very modern appliances.

J.J.: Did you ever go into builder's supplies?

No we never went into builders—we'd contract for--furnish locks. For instance the Langren Hotel, we'd furnish all the locks for the Langren Hotel. Lots of buildings at that time we'd furnished with hardware, which is shipped direct and marked for that building right from the factories—it was assembled at the factories and shipped to them.

Now we got into paint business and we had a awfully good line of paint. First there was the Dupont paint. And at one time ??Lona Maknes?? paint was one of the best paints made in the United States. Then after ?? we handled the Pittsburg line. Sometimes maybe one or two carloads a year of it. All together we had what we would call a successful, ?? hardware business.

J.J.: Now did you always pay cash for everything you got?

Yes I did. That was one of the first thing I learned. If you paid your bills properly you'd get a cash discount ranging sometimes as low as 1% but usually 2% and also specially you'd get 5%. When business got so very good and income tax was put on us, that one year I had to pay income tax on the discount I had taken and it hurt my feelings tremendously. I thought certainly was an imposition? They said that was just as much a earned profit as anything else in the business.

J. J.: So your policy then was basically to pay cash and get the lowest possible cost on your items, and probably keep your overhead down which also has an influence on cost. And then sell at a reasonable mark up.

My motto soon arrived after I went in business, I had a little session with myself which lasted several days, and finally come up with the slogan that if I had any friends I would meet? most of them there in the hardware store. Where would I find better friends than those who were patronize me and I would see frequently. In other words, it was my function to assemble such articles as people wanted and needed and had to have, and what would be serviceable to them at a reasonable price and have them on hand when they needed them, and be able to deliver them immediately. And it seemed to have been a very good ??

Now another thing that when I first started in business back in 1905, I began to look for every help I could in the way of running a hardware store. And I remembered having seen in the newspapers that the year before, 1904, the hardware dealers of North and South Carolina in Charlotte, NC and had formed what they called the Hardware Ass. Of the Carolinas, and they met every June. So I think maybe the 2nd or 3rd year of my

business I talked to some of the traveling men who went regularly and I went down and met with them and joined them and found they were a great service to me. And attending the meetings was good, because the hardware men would give experiences where they had been mistreated by some company with a sharp and shrewd salesman—sell them something that didn't turn out to be right. Then they'd use the combined influence of all the dealers in North Carolina to correct these rights. And in some cases it paid off. And I have already said, I made friends with my two competitors as soon as we went in business. And another thing that I tried to establish with them, that if one had a call for a certain article that was temporarily out of stock, he would go to the other dealer and buy it at probably 10 or 15% over what that dealer had paid for it. And I found it was very pleasant to let them have articles like that. And after I started in the wholesale business, they found a good many things I could furnish them with this as cheap as they could buy from any jobber in the country and I always had it here and when they ran out they just sent out and got it from me. And I had a great deal of pleasure and enjoyment and I presume might be counted successful, because I continued through the years at it.

J.J.: What was your policy on extending credit to your customers?

Well, that was certainly very crude as well as everything else.

[End of side one of tape 5, marked "side 7." Beginning of side 2 of tape 5 marked "Side 8 The Hardware Years Cont."]

They had…at first we had no way of checking, we had no way of knowing. You had to know people. And I found that I was being imposed on a great many times by some fellow who would come in and tell me his name and where he lived, and maybe I knew the family name. And he said he had a job, he'd been out of a job and didn't have any tools. But he could get a job if he'd just get some tools. Well, we'd figure up what tools he wanted, it would run 10 or 12 dollars and a great many times I'd let them have them just on their say so. Well, some of them come back and paid me and others didn't. And when you went to look for them, you'd find the tools in the pond shop. But after a while we got a merchant's association started and then we would call when we had an application for credit. We'd call them and get their experience from other merchants in the Asheville community. And the merchant's association built up their credit information, each time you'd call in and give them a name of somebody would want to open an account with them. If they didn't have his credit reference they'd call up and give you the information. So it put business on a much sounder basis. I did loose quite a good deal of money through our crude system.

J.J: Well how about the crooks, the shop lifters and the bad check writers and things like that, did they give you much trouble from time to time?

Well, we had our share of those who were good slick talkers. Sometimes get a check cashed and buy something which they'd take down to the pawn shop and we'd find the check was no good. He was in trouble. We never had but one robbery and that was on a Saturday night when they went through the stairway that lead from the street up to

the second and third story, they got this door open and went and cut through the steps and opened the safe and got $2000 money out of it, and took a gun or two and some ammunition. And the officers never was able to arrest anybody, but their keenest men said that they knew the men who did it. They had been laying around Asheville for some time. Fact is, they were hometown boys. But after that night, they were never seen or heard from around Asheville. And they had been watching them and was surprised that night that these crooks had dodged them and got into my store and got away with the stuff.

One time we found a trail of 22 ammunition box tops and traced it to where a half of a 36" high window, 18" wide had been broken and out and left over night. And they sent a small boy through there and loaded up on 22 ammunition and dollar watches and pocket knives. And when they went to the little fellow—they knew him because he was pretty slick, he'd been caught before—they went to him and he told them there was some other boys, they were all under 12 years old who had robbed the store. So, the only thing they could do was to get their mother to tan their hides, which I hope did a lot of good.

J.J.: Now when did you start handling power tools?

Well, it was along, soon after, I don't know, I'm not positive, but I guess the date must have been around 1937when they came around with power tools. I'd been reading about them in the hardware magazines and one day a fellow dropped in. The store from the Delta Tool Co. and said he was on his way to Charlotte to put on a demonstration down there of Delta tools. And I said, well my goodness, what are you going to do about us? He said, "Well, if you want the agency the way we do that, is that we send you certain tools which are good sellers anywhere in the U.S. We send to you on assignment, and I'll come here and demonstrate them, and if you're dissatisfied at the end of the demonstration, we ship them back." Well, the man came and by chance again, we had a man working for us by the name of Shotwell, who was pretty clever with tools. And in no time flat he—fact is he worked in a commercial planters mill—and he understand a good deal about robbers and planters ? and cut-off saws. So he helped this man put on the demonstration. And it was very gratifying to see the mechanics and all come round, and watch the maneuvers and some of them wanted to buy the machines and take them right out. But we kept them there for a week and we kept open on Saturday nights and we had a store full of people watching.

I remember one man particularly, he was a chauffeur, and he came here as a sick man from somewhere, and he was a very good cabinetmaker, but he wasn't able to carry on on account of his being too weak. And he bought a set of cheap electric woodworking tools, and when he came in and asked the man who was running a piece of lumber through the saw, that he had planted? And this man said would you let me hold that plank? And the fellow says, have you had experience with it? And he said, yes. So he let him hold it. And he stepped back and smiled. He says the tools I have just shake me to pieces when I run that piece of lumber through like that. But he says, there's no vibration there at all. He says, I want a saw and a jobber? quick as I can get them. Well, wound up the week by the man going away with an order for quite a number of tools and some accessories. And from that on, it was quite a big part of the business and it turned out most successful.

Well, when I first went into business and I sold something that had to be delivered, we employed a one horse dray which usually stood on Pack Square there for hire, for short orders, and short work. Had we'd have to pay him .25 to .50 to deliver a stove or something like that around town. And after I bought out the W.A. Boyce business, they had a fine, big horse with a spring wagon, that they'd haul stoves out in the country to. And we used that for delivery. And we found one morning, we found him dead down in the delivery stable where we kept him, and so a fellow came along that had a couple of spanking little mules. Just little, very small mules, so we put a tongue in the wagon and this wagon and got some harness and dressed them up, and we made quite a show delivering our hardware with these two little mules. They attracted attention everywhere we went.

Well, they had a big parade in town one day, for some reason or other, I don't know what. And Mr. Shotwell and the colored driver got it decorated very highly. And they dressed up my daughter, which was then about 5 or 6 years old, in pink with a pink parasol, and the sun and tamoshanter and --? and they rode up on the front seat and we had all kind of hardware on a wagon in the parade. And the unusual thing of having the children there, certainly was a great drawing card, and attracted a great deal of attention.

Well, it wasn't long after that until we went to the automobile. Found that Dodge made a very good-bodied truck, and we got one of those and used it for years. Continued with the truck after that for all of our delivering until we sold out of business in 1956.

Well, we had—we'd employ our clerks on a trial basis, and some of them turned out to be very good. And at that time, we could employ boys 12 years up. And sometimes parents would come along with a strapless? boy or, a boy ambitious that wanted to learn and we'd take him in, and he'd help us and run errands and do lots of what was very helpful in many ways. Some of the people that we took on turned out to be good clerks, faithful. And Mr. Profitt had to retire because of cramps in his hand and we employed a man by the name of Mr. Harp as a bookkeeper, and he stayed with us several years going from us to the Bon Marche. And then we found a woman came to town who was partially deaf, and had been trying to live in Florida, and on account of the --? there, made her head worse. And she was faithful and stayed with us for several years as a bookkeeper. And my son who was born in 1911, in the twenties he'd come to the store and help. And it's very gratifying now, to hear from some of the boys who came in to learn the business, though some of them didn't stay long. Sometimes they're kind enough to tell me that they appreciate what I did for them—getting them started. And one thing I watched particularly when any of them grew up to age and had to go into the government service, I always had them to be sure and tell the recruiting officer of any thing that they particularly liked to do or wanted to do. I remember one of them was working with hand made radios at that time. He was always fooling with them. Every spare minute he got he was fooling with his radio. So when he went in, I told him to tell them about that. Well, they put him in communications, and when he came back out, why he had studied electronics and he got a loan from the government and went to Los Angeles and he's a big dealer out there now in electronics.

Another young fellow was going to be inducted into the Army, and I told him to tell them that he'd worked in hardware stores and liked handling hardware, so they put him in the supply depot, and he stayed in there for the duration of the war.

So we found that in dealing with people, it was most interesting at the time and since it's good to hear from some of them, saying we had been kind to them and favored them.

J.J.: Let me ask you this. Did you do much advertising in those days?

Well, I never was a big advertiser. But I didn't feel that I should completely ignore the service of a good newspaper. And I first started with the afternoon paper, and selected a place on the back page. And for years we ran a small four or five advertisement on the back page of the paper, changing the copy frequently.

Well, then when they merged, I went in with the Citizen-Times, and then occasionally, in the case of this machinery, the company that shipped the machinery to me, the Delta Company required me to put in a half page advertisement in the local paper, which we found most rewarding. And frequently we'd take an advertisement on the whole page on automobile tires, and also on paint, and other items that I don't recall at this time. Oh, aluminum ware and cooking utensils. We used to do a tremendous business in those. And then after, of course, when the stainless steel copper bottom pans came along we had to advertise that cause people didn't know about it, it was something new. And it wasn't like the present day when something new comes out every day and you have to keep advertising, advertising. Back in the days when I first went into business after years there wasn't anything new at all. You just had the same ole thing all the time. Course in the season, you had to advertise your heating stoves and your cooking stoves. And in the winter time you--in the fall you'd advertise your plows to the farmers. So I never was a big advertiser, but I thought it was necessary to keep a little ad in the paper, just like keeping your front door open 6 days of the week.

J.J: You also used the radio station occasionally?

Well after time went on, radio come along, we found that we got help from some of the people we bought from and they wanted programs put on and they'd bear ½ the expense.

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